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You'll Never Get Out of Bedford Falls:
The Inescapable Family in American Science-Fiction and Fantasy Films
by Andrew Gordon

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What do *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), the *Star Wars* trilogy (1977-83), and the *Back to the Future* trilogy (1985-90) have in common? The overt message of all these American fantasy or science-fiction films could be stitched on a sampler. It is, as Dorothy learns in Oz, "There's no place like home." You may bitterly resent or hate your hometown, your home, or even your family, and yearn desperately to escape, but you never will -- you keep returning. Even though you may not realize it, and no matter how bleak things may appear, home is where the heart is. You can never leave the bosom of your family; you carry it with you wherever you go, even if you go deep into fantasyland, rocket through the galaxy, or travel through time.

Dorothy imagines she has been transported from Kansas to Oz, but she travels there in her family home, and she never really leaves its confines. The people she knew in Kansas reappear, slightly disguised, in her Oz dream. And try as he might, George Bailey never escapes the boundaries of his hometown of Bedford Falls, either. Like Dorothy and George, Luke Skywalker dreams of getting away from the family farm and having adventures in faraway places. Although Luke traverses his entire galaxy, he never really leaves home either, because whatever planet he's on, he keeps bumping into his sister Princess Leia and his father Darth Vader. Marty McFly goes forward in time from 1985 to 2015 and backward to 1955 and 1885, but he too never leaves his hometown of Hill Valley or his family, in the form of his parents, his wife and children, or his remote ancestors. These fantasies are compromise formations: the protagonists escape their families, but paradoxically they never really escape them.

Three of the heroes are teenagers -- Dorothy is twelve or thirteen, Luke about seventeen as his story begins, and Marty the same -- and their adventures are adolescent rites of passage, filled with emotional and physical turmoil. Says a critic, "Dorothy's 'trip' is a marvelous metaphor for the psychological journey every adolescent must make...when the enormous thrust of physical, intellectual and sexual growth literally propels the youngster out of the family nest" (Greenberg 14). All of the heroes must be yanked away from their homes and families against their will, through violence: by a tornado, by invading Stormtroopers, or by "Libyan terrorists." These devices are just a pretext, a projection of their inner restlessness. The heroes turn quickly from ordinary kids into fugitives, rebels, outcasts on the run. All three nearly die and all three become murderers: Dorothy kills two Wicked Witches, Luke kills thousands of Imperial troops, and even Marty inadvertently causes his father's death when he changes history. These films reaffirm the ambivalence of the adolescent, who is torn between childhood and adulthood, between needing the parents and hating them, between clinging to home and desiring to destroy it or escape from it. To grow up means breaking away, to separate from the safe family nest and establish a life of one's own; this can rarely be accomplished without both inner and outer conflict. Even George Bailey, the sole adult protagonist of the four, behaves like an

adolescent in his exaggerated dreams, his melodramatic stance toward himself and his family, and his abrupt mood swings. One critic notes that George's "dreams seemed prompted by boys' books" and that "George Bailey was Tom Sawyer grown up" (Ray 193-94).

The restlessness of the heroes is evident early in each film. Dorothy begins on the run after a violent altercation with Miss Gulch. Soon she runs away from home, and she never really stops running until the end. In his first scene as an adult, George buys a suitcase and gets ready to leave town. Just as Dorothy chases after Toto, so Luke is drawn away from home by chasing after R2D2: the little dog and the little robot can be seen as extensions of the protagonist's restless spirit (Greenberg 18). And Marty in his opening scene is late for school and on the run.

The popularity of these fantasies with audiences of all ages suggests that the particular conflict they embody is embedded deep in the American character -- that there is something fundamentally adolescent about most American adults. Perhaps it stems from our immigrant uprooting, from our revolutionary origins, or from our pioneer restlessness, but Americans are ambivalent about home and family. We seem compelled to loudly reassert the value of hearth and home, as if we constantly needed to persuade ourselves of their worth. Erik Erikson writes, "the call of the frontier, the temptation to move on, forced those who stayed on to become defensively sedentary, and defensively proud" (Childhood and Society 187).

In all the movies under discussion, there is a scene in which the hero returns to find his or her family home changed dramatically for the worse: Dorothy's home is empty; George's home has been vacant and crumbling for decades and his children were never born; Luke's home has been burned down and his aunt and uncle killed; and Marty's home is a construction site -- it has not yet been built. Behind the fear of the destruction of the home lies the wish for the burdensome family to disappear, a fantasy reenacted most recently in American movies in the enormously popular *Home Alone* (1990).

All four heroes are also endowed with magical helpers to guide them or magical powers to protect them in their quest to return home: Dorothy has the Good Witch and the ruby slippers; George has Clarence the guardian angel; Luke has Obi-Wan and the power of the Force; and Marty has Dr. Brown, some 1985 technology transported to 1955, and a time machine.

Dorothy is an orphan -- we never find out what happened to her parents -- living on a farm in Kansas, the epitome of the quotidian, with her Auntie Em and Uncle Henry. Besides her dog Toto, her family also includes three hired hands who are like older brothers to whom she turns for advice. "The farm is a matriarchy, Em obviously rules the roost" (Greenberg 18). The period is the Depression, and it's not easy scraping out a living. Em is so preoccupied with her own troubles that she doesn't have time to listen to Dorothy's.

Dorothy has already lost her parents and now feels abandoned once again. She resents her aunt for not paying attention to her and for not being able to protect her and Toto from Miss Gulch. Nevertheless, two scenes that we see, but Dorothy doesn't, tell us that she is truly loved: when Em tells off Miss Gulch and when the distraught Em cries out for the missing girl as the twister approaches. Feeling rejected, Dorothy concocts a compensatory fantasy, a utopian place "over the rainbow," a candyland "where troubles melt like lemon drops." As Professor Marvel tells her after she runs away, "They don't

understand you at home...they don't appreciate you...you want to see other lands -- big cities, big mountains, big oceans!"

But even as she runs away, she carries in her basket a picture of her aunt. Frightened by Professor Marvel into believing that she has given Auntie Em a heart attack, Dorothy runs back home, and for the rest of the movie she is trying to return to her family. She goes back, only to find the house empty and a storm raging (a Depression nightmare, repeated in the 1940 film *The Grapes of Wrath* -- dust storms and foreclosures were actually forcing farmers off their land).

Dorothy's ambivalence about leaving is expressed in her Oz dream, in which her mode of transportation is her own home. When she arrives in Oz, she utters the immortal line, "Toto, I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore!" Ironically, she still is in Kansas: since she's in her own bed, dreaming, she has never left it. Oz is simply a Kansas of the mind, her own private Kansas. Her Oz dream, like all dreams, is completely self-centered; everything in Oz revolves around Dorothy, who becomes a heroine and world savior. This is a Kansas more to her liking, where she can make almost everyone serve her and worship her and she overcomes all Wicked Witches. She brings with her not only her house, but also her family: Toto, and the three workmen transformed into her companions the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion. Even Miss Gulch reappears as the Wicked Witch and the Professor as the Wizard. The only significant omissions are the characters toward whom she feels most conflicted, her aunt and uncle (her aunt is glimpsed only briefly in a crystal ball). The mixture of resentment, guilt, and dependence she feels towards them is too powerful to be represented directly but is the real subject of her dream. In Oz, she can kill witches and remain guilt-free: she wasn't in control of the house and she aimed the water at the scarecrow, not the witch. The deaths were both accidents, not her fault. Similarly, her injury -- the blow on the head that nearly kills her -- enables Dorothy to escape mentally, at the same time that it punishes her family and punishes Dorothy for her evil wishes toward them. Her Oz dream is a compromise, fulfilling the paradoxical desire to leave home without ever really leaving.

Just as Dorothy never leaves Kansas, so George Bailey never leaves the confines of Bedford Falls. George's story is complicated by the fact that he is not only a child who wants to escape, like Dorothy, but grows up to become a reluctant, fraudulent patriarch like the Wizard, forced to rule over a kingdom he doesn't really want. He is the most deeply divided, neurotic protagonist of this group of fantasy films.

George is torn all his life between his altruistic, self-sacrificing side, which keeps him at home, and his extravagant dreams of glory, which make him yearn for travel to faraway lands. In the opening sequence, George is presented as a young saint who first saves his younger brother Harry's life by jumping into an icy lake, sacrificing the hearing in one ear in the process, and then saves the career of a drunken pharmacist and the life of the person the pharmacist might have poisoned with the wrong prescription. But at the same time George wishes to become a millionaire and subscribes to the National Geographic magazine, dreaming of exotic places.

When George grows up, every time he is about to leave, circumstances conspire to keep him home. As elder son, George is fated to replace his father, a man he always admired but never wished to be. He inherits his father's Building and Loan company, a precarious little institution always on the verge of financial collapse, and struggles to keep it afloat during the Depression and WW II. When George proposes to Mary, his hometown sweetheart, his inner conflict surfaces dramatically: first he rages furiously against

marriage as another trap to keep him in that small town, but then he eagerly embraces her. They marry and raise four kids. George is never happy at being stuck in "crummy" little Bedford Falls, at having to forego his dreams of world travel, college, fame as an architect, and wealth. Enviously, he watches his friend Sam Wainwright leave town to become a millionaire businessman and his brother Harry leave to attend college and become a successful research chemist and a war hero.

When his dotty Uncle Billy loses $8,000 from the Bailey Building and Loan receipts, George faces bankruptcy, scandal, and prison on Christmas Eve. His lifelong self-sacrifice for family and town seem to have led him only to ruin. George's underlying resentment of them surfaces and he rages at his family and goes berserk, deciding to kill himself for the insurance money. Suicide will be his ultimate self-sacrifice, his escape from an impossible situation, and his revenge on his family and community for having denied him his dreams of glory.

Like Dorothy, George runs away from home and then is saved by a dream that scares him enough to make him want to embrace the fate and the family that he had rejected. George's dream is provided by Clarence, his guardian angel, who grants George's wish by showing him what life would be like if he had never existed. George is turned into a man with no identity and Bedford Falls is transformed into Pottersville, a sleazy, miserable town controlled by the greedy old financier Mr. Potter, George's archenemy. The staid Main Street is now a red-light district selling hard liquor and prostitution. Everyone is worse off. George's brother is dead, his Uncle Billy in an insane asylum, his mother a mean, bitter widow, his wife a spinster librarian, his children never born, and his home (like Dorothy's after she runs away) abandoned and empty. George turns out to have been the linchpin, the guardian on whom the entire community depended; remove the beloved patriarch and family values collapse, giving way to Potter's values of every man for himself. According to the moral logic of the film, without a benign father figure in charge, society degenerates into sin, greed, loneliness, cruelty, violence, anarchy, and death. Although his Pottersville dream is a nightmare, it is, like Dorothy's Oz dream, entirely egocentric. "George, the vision showed, was not merely a hero; he was the center of the world on whom everything depended" (Ray 200). Dorothy. George, Luke, and Marty: all four are world saviors.

Like Scrooge, George is terrified into virtue by a Christmas Eve nightmare. He returns to Bedford Falls for a last-minute, fairy-tale reprieve, a total wish fulfillment: in the spirit of Christmas, everyone in town chips in to bail out George Bailey. Even his war hero brother -- whom he had killed off in his dream -- returns to celebrate Saint George as the real town hero. *It's a Wonderful Life* ends, like *Wizard of Oz*, with the protagonist reunited with his family in a warm tableau. The fabulous quest ends with the hero never having left town, because, after all, "There's no place like home."

Like Dorothy and George, Luke Skywalker wants to leave his stifling home to fulfill dreams of glory in faraway places. Luke complains bitterly to C-3PO, "I'll never get out of here...Not unless you can alter time, speed up the harvest, or teleport me off this rock...If there's a bright center to the universe, this is the planet it's farthest from." Dorothy's Auntie Em keeps her down on the farm in Kansas; Luke's Uncle Owen keeps him down on the farm on Tatooine. And like George, Luke watches his friends go off to college (in this case, to the Space Academy) or to war while he remains behind. His Aunt Beru says, "Owen, we can't keep him here forever. Most of his friends are gone. It means so much to him." Like Dorothy and George, Luke secretly wishes to be rid of his family: in all three films, the protagonist returns to find his home empty, the family vanished or dead.

The obvious parallels between *Star Wars* and *The Wizard of Oz* have frequently been noted: in both there is the orphan hero who is raised on a farm by an aunt and uncle and yearns to escape to adventure. Obi-Wan Kenobi resembles the Wizard; the loyal, plucky little robot R2D2 is Toto; C3PO is the Tin Man; and Chewbacca is the Cowardly Lion. Darth Vader replaces the Wicked Witch: this is a patriarchy rather than a matriarchy.

Star Wars, like *Wizard* and *Wonderful Life*, is an oedipal drama. In all three, a parent figure is split into diametrically opposed good and bad sides: Auntie Em vs. Miss Gulch (a.k.a. the Wicked Witch); George's father vs. Mr. Potter; and Anakin Skywalker versus Darth Vader. *Star Wars*, however, is both more mythic and more melodramatic than the earlier two films, which resemble fairy tales. Thus Lucas's saga foregrounds the oedipal conflict by having the hero battle his own father and is closer to the complexity of real life, since the father is simultaneously both good and evil, both Anakin Skywalker and Darth Vader.

Again, the conclusion of *Star Wars*, in *Return of the Jedi*, resembles the loving family reunion at the conclusion of *Wizard* and *Wonderful Life*. Although Luke has left his home, like Dorothy and George he is surrounded in the end by his extended family and community: sister Leia and prospective brother-in-law Han Solo, loyal helpers Lando, Chewbacca, the two robots, and the Ewok tribe. Even Luke's three dead father figures -- Obi-Wan Kenobi, Yoda, and Anakin Skywalker -- are resurrected as ghosts to attend the reunion. Although the *Star Wars* trilogy expands the myth to a cosmic scale, it is really similar to the small-town adventure of *Wizard* and *Wonderful Life*: the quest of a hero who loses and then recovers his family.

Finally, the *Back to the Future* trilogy, another oedipal tale of a hero who runs away from home but never really leaves his family, is deeply influenced by these earlier classic film fantasies. Marty McFly flees in time rather than in space, but he is constantly attempting to reshape his family closer to his heart's desire.

Like Dorothy, George, and Luke, Marty both loves and hates his family. In his case, he resents them for being losers and for apparently dooming him to repeating their pattern of failure. "No McFly ever amounted to anything in the history of Hill Valley," Mr. Strickland tells Marty. Marty's Wizard or Obi-Wan who rescues him from his fate and enables him to escape into adventure is the inventor Dr. Brown.

Marty's voyage from Hill Valley 1985 to Hill Valley 1955 is the equivalent of Dorothy's trip to Oz. (Is it merely accidental that the first thing Marty bumps into when he lands in the past is a scarecrow?) Like Dorothy and George, as soon as he arrives Marty only wishes to get back home from this strange place. But Marty's trip back in time is a wish-fulfillment dream that allows him to reverse the flow of the generations and to become the parents to his own parents, even helping to give birth to himself.

Both the *Star Wars* and the *Back to the Future* trilogies are eclectic, postmodern, generically self-conscious films which incorporate allusions to many previous films. In particular, *Back to the Future 2* includes one sequence which is an extended homage to *It's a Wonderful Life*. Marty returns to an altered 1985 in which his archenemy Biff Tannen has gotten hold of a 2015 sports almanac and become the richest man in Hill Valley. Hill Valley has been transformed into an infernal "Pottersville," complete with sleaze, gambling, corruption, economic decline, violent crime, and toxic waste, so that the town now resembles many declining American cities of the 1980s. In Pottersville, George found his home vacant; Marty finds his occupied by a black family (a concession to white middle-

class racial fears of the 1980s). George goes to the cemetery in Pottersville and discovers the grave of his brother; Marty discovers the grave of his father.

Star Wars foregrounds the oedipal conflict which is implicit in *Wizard* and *Wonderful Life*; *Back to the Future* adds to that conflict an explicit sexuality. In *Back to the Future 2*, the "Pottersville" sequence is turned into a blatantly oedipal nightmare: Biff has not only taken over the town but killed Marty's father and married Marty's mother. The entire family is in thrall to Biff, especially Marty's alcoholic mother, who has had breast implants to please him. Marty is forced yet one more time to rescue his family; when he confronts Biff, he finds him naked in a Jacuzzi with two prostitutes. Director Robert Zemeckis' homage to director Frank Capra's *Wonderful Life* points up the difference between the relative innocence of Hollywood fantasy in the 40s as compared to the graphic 1980s.

All the films under discussion end with family reunions, and their endings may provide a gauge to their respective decades. In *Wizard*, it is enough for the family to stay together; perhaps that is all that could reasonably be expected during the Depression, although there is in the film no mention of current events to disturb the fantasy.

In *It's a Wonderful Life*, however, family life is profoundly affected by the cycles of twentieth-century American history: we follow the Baileys over a quarter of a century, from 1919 to 1945, from the end of WW I to the end of WW II. The return of George from his attempted suicide is reinforced by the return of Harry from the war; peace in the microcosm of the family corresponds to peace in the macrocosm of the world. The family reunion also coincides with the coming of Christmas and Clarence's earning his wings as an angel -- there are religious as well as historical overtones here that are absent in *Wizard*, a suggestion that God is intervening on behalf of Americans. If God is on our side, that explains not only the delivery of George Bailey from disaster but, by extension, the delivery of America from the trials of the Depression and WW II.

The family reunion in *Jedi* also has political and religious overtones appropriate to the decade in which it appeared. Once again, the reunion coincides with the celebration of the end of a war, except that now the family microcosm corresponds to the galactic macrocosm. The religious overtones consist of the power of the Force and the ectoplasmic revival of Luke's three father figures. John Hellmann suggests that Lucas was constructing a myth to help effect a healing after the trauma of Vietnam; it is a way of allowing America to win instead of lose and of restoring God (the Force) to our side. Thus the furry little Ewoks, guerillas fighting in the jungle, using primitive weapons to conquer the technologically superior Imperial invaders, correspond to the Vietcong, except that in this fantasy the Americans are the good guys, allied with the winning V.C., adopted into their tribe or family. Significantly, this is the only one of the films mentioned in which the family reunion takes place outdoors; it suggests as well the ecological concerns and nature romanticism of the late 60s and 70s.

The first *Back to the Future* ends like the other three films, with a family reunion, except that through his intervention in family history, Marty has transformed them from lower middle-class losers to upscale yuppies. *Back to the Future 3*, however, ends with the creation of two new families. Marty will marry Jennifer, remain in Hill Valley, and probably become a successful musician. Doc Brown, however, has married Clara, a woman from 1885, had two sons, Jules and Verne, and built a new time machine in the form of a flying train (nineteenth-century technology married to the twenty-first century). Now his family will range back and forth through time. Marty's story overcomes through fantasy the 1980s fear of the loss of upward mobility in a period when the middle-class family was losing

ground after twenty-five years of almost unbroken economic improvement. But Dr. Brown's story deals more with 1980s fears about the increasing fragmentation of the family due to modern technology; it suggests the wish for a new form of American family togetherness, a postmodern family not splintered but united by technology, manipulating and transforming reality together.

Dorothy traveled to Oz in a flying house; Dr. Brown travels through time in a flying locomotive which is also his family home. Dorothy brings only her dog; Dr. Brown brings his dog and his entire family. You can't get away from them, anyway, so why not turn fantasy into a family vacation? (The Disney Compnay has made a fortune by providing just that.) We all want to escape into adventure sometimes, but we also yearn for the security of family and the comforts of home: through a fantastic compromise, Dr. Brown gets both at the same time.

It is as though the characters in these films were under a magic spell, and to pass beyond the borders of the hometown or to step outside the family were taboo. These films give us the appearance of a fantastic journey, only to return us to the place where we began and to affirm the conservative message that home is the best of all possible places in the universe for you. What such films are really saying is not "There's no place like home" but "There's no place but home"--because the bonds of family are omnipresent and inescapable. One of the functions of American fantasy, then, is apparently to provide a home away from home.

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Dark Father: Masculinity and the Violent Cycle of Father-Son Abuse
by Matril

"If you wanted a subtitle for these movies, it could be 'Fathers and Sons'."
-- Ian McDiarmid.

Father and son relationships, both real and metaphorical, abound in the *Star Wars* trilogy. The most prominent of these in the original trilogy is, of course, between Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker. It is a disturbing and at once compelling relationship, fraught with violence and abuse. Set in the fantastic world of a galaxy far, far away, it bears a certain surrealistic quality. Certainly few abusive fathers in our real world have gone so far as to fight a son in armed combat and brutally sever his hand. However, a study of Vader's behavior toward Luke during their confrontation on Bespin reveals that he is not so different from real, ordinary fathers in our world. The abuse, in either circumstance, can be traced to a struggle to attain an elusive ideal of masculinity. This ideal has always been that unattainable goal which motivates and tortures men from childhood onward and is inevitably passed along to their sons unless the cycle can be broken.

What is masculinity? The answer varies from culture to culture, from young boys to old men, and even from one individual male to another. In Frank Pittman's *Man Enough*, he describes how he asked his workout buddies how they would define masculinity. Each one offered a different meaning. "'Masculinity is weighing about 235, benching maybe 475, and being able to go anywhere on the field you want to go...' 'It's not size, it's aggressiveness.' '...Masculinity is being big...Because girls want guys that are big...' '...doing what you got to do without whining about it.' (7-8)" There are several broad points, however, that nearly all notions of masculinity in our culture share. It is something that should be attained at all costs, but something that can very easily be lost. It is often associated with how a man relates to other men, or to women. It is determined by a man's level of physical or sexual prowess, while an emotional man is considered decidedly un-masculine.

With such a myriad series of definitions, it is no wonder that masculinity proves to be so elusive. This might raise the question -- particularly from women -- of why men continue bothering to seek it. The answer would probably vary just as widely as the definitions of masculinity. But it is fairly clear that a man's desire to achieve a given level of masculinity, through whatever various means, is closely associated with his relationship or lack of relationship with his father. Pittman points out, "When fathers are gone for whatever reason, little boys don't get to learn from watching real men leading a real life with real women" (11). They are then forced to seek out models of masculinity from their peers and from figures in popular culture, which inevitably leads to a confused and exaggerated notion of manhood. "Boys without models are likely to overdo the masculinity, like a masculine impersonator" (12).

Unfortunately, even when fathers are present in their sons' lives, they can still have a detrimental effect upon their sons' idea of masculinity. A common result of masculine-driven fathering is performance-based self-esteem. In his book on covert male depression, Terrence Real explains, "Performance-based self-esteem augments an insufficient, internal sense of worth by the measuring of one's accomplishments against those of others and coming out on top" (182). A father who offers love and respect for his son only after he has achieved something will lead the son to feel he is only worthwhile if

he wins the big game, beats another boy in a fight, or, as he grows older, makes the most money or marries the prettiest wife. The son cannot achieve an absolute sense of self-worth; his esteem changes depending on whether he feel he has failed or succeeded.

Real points out, “Psychoanalysts and developmental psychologists have been clear that the capacity to esteem the self arises from a history of unconditional regard from one’s caregivers” (182). When parents fail to offer this regard, the results can be severe and even tragic. Consider the phrase “be a man!” which so many fathers use to chide their sons. From a literal standpoint the command is rather ludicrous -- genetically speaking, it is impossible for the son to not be a man. What the father truly means, however, is that the son must achieve masculinity, by some performance or another, or else he is in danger of losing his manhood -- and by corollary, his father’s esteem. Sons may resent their fathers for this treatment, and yet spend their entire lives continuing to seek that esteem. A man can despise his father while simultaneously believing that he is the sole person who can bestow or take away his title of masculinity.

The struggle for a masculinity of sorts is evident in Vader’s treatment of his son on Bespin. A detailed analysis of how he has become so obsessive would fill an entire separate paper, but by briefly looking at the prequel trilogy, we are made aware of the conditions that have brought Anakin Skywalker to this point. He is literally fatherless, and throughout his childhood and adolescence he is constantly seeking surrogate fathers, from Qui-Gon to Obi-Wan to, ominously, the duplicitous Palpatine. “While he is not, we must assume, Anakin’s natural father in this film, he’s certainly a father figure for him” (McDiarmid). It is no wonder that Vader has arrived at such a confused and destructive notion of masculinity. It will play out most horribly as he meets his own son for the first time.

Vader lures Luke into an intentionally frightening environment, the city’s hellish freezing chamber, and appears in a startling manner that is clearly meant to intimidate his son. Such scare tactics are common for a father with the misdirected idea of “making a man” out of him. Pittman describes one such father “who saw happiness as a sign of weakness...He brutalized [his son] in an effort to turn him into a contending brute: he emotionally attack-trained his son” (69). It is not simple hatred that motivates this father-son behavior. Trapped somewhere inside Vader’s brutality, his softer feelings for his son are evident. He praises Luke. “The Force is with you, young Skywalker.” But he must dampen the praise with, “you are not a Jedi yet.” To simply offer unconditional approval of Luke would, in Vader’s mind, encourage him to be satisfied with his skills, to give up the quest for masculinity. So he gives two insults for every word of praise. “You have learned much, young one,” he acknowledges, but then, after dropping him into the freezing pit, “All too easy. Perhaps you are not as strong as the Emperor thought.” And even when Luke performs the difficult feat of leaping out of the pit and escaping the carbon freeze Vader had planned for him, his father’s “Impressive. Most impressive,” carries an edge of sarcasm. It is all a part of the emotional attack-training.

Vader may believe that he is doing his son a great favor, but his motives are truly selfish. When Luke succeeds in pushing Vader off the platform, his father seems to decide to change the rules of the game they are playing. The danger of being defeated by Luke has evidently shaken him; his confused sense of masculinity compels him to win at all costs. So he plays dirty, using the Force to throw heavy machinery at his son even as they continue dueling with lightsabers. Pittman described this warped version of masculinity as “the contender” and warns, “Fathers who compete hard with their kids are monstrous. The father, for a throw-away victory, is sacrificing the very heart of his child’s sense of being good enough. He may believe he is making his son tough...but he is only making the child

desperate and mean like himself. Fathers must let their sons (and daughters) have their victories" (55).

Yet even as Vader achieves the meager satisfaction of gaining the upper hand, he is filled with a violent disgust of his son's weakness. He compares Luke to Obi-Wan, whose passive lowering of his weapon during the duel on the Death Star represents the polar opposite of Vader's notion of masculinity. It is likely that he is also seeing his former self in his son. This projection of himself would explain much of Vader's behavior toward Luke. Real explains, "Projective identification [is] the process...wherein a person injects into another the disowned aspects of his own personality. When my father took a strap to me he beat into me his unacknowledged misery" (206). The parallels between young Anakin and Luke, both in their situations and their moral struggles, are obvious. Whether Vader overtly or only subconsciously recognizes those parallels, it is clear that his violence toward Luke is in large part derived from a vicious repudiation of his old self.

The truly tragic aspect of father-son abuse is that it is perpetuated from one generation to another. "Carried shame and carried feelings...are the means by which the wound, the legacy of pain, is passed from father to son, mother to son, across generations" (Real 206). Luke does not even know Vader is his father during the bulk of their confrontation, but he has already identified him as the one who will determine his masculinity. It matters little that he hates him; indeed, that is quite typical for the more dysfunctional father-son relationships. He responds to Vader's taunts and attacks just like a resentful son who accepts and strives for his father's version of masculinity no matter how much he despises him. He shows bravado. "You'll find I'm full of surprises," he brags, and fights recklessly. He responds to Vader's taunt not to let himself "be destroyed" by obeying, though he believes he is being willfully defiant, by fending off another attack. Vader says repeatedly, "Join me," and though Luke overtly refuses, the hatred and violence in his refusal is a covert acceptance of the sort of masculinity that Vader is offering. Real speaks of the awful transference that occurs during abuse. "In this tragic moment, the very forces that betray the boy, forces he most often finds abhorrent, come to live inside him" (207). Luke, as he was warned in the cave on Dagobah, is in danger of becoming his father.

As the duel becomes increasingly one-sided, culminating in the severing of Luke's hand, Vader's tone shifts from that of a contender to what Pittman calls "a controller," yet another guise of distorted masculinity. He explains, "the need to control may appear selfish and intrusive to the objects of it, but the men who are doing the controlling see themselves as fixing things, correcting them, or getting them back on track. A man would feel irresponsible and ashamed of himself if he let things go out of control when he had the chance to make them 'right'" (82). This serves as a remarkably accurate portrait of the man who once said, "I'm good at fixing things...Why couldn't I save [my mother]? I know I could have...I should be [all-powerful]. Someday I will be." Such notions, taken to the extreme, have led Vader to this confrontation with his son. "I will complete your training," he declares confidently. "With our combined strength we can end this destructive conflict and bring order to the galaxy...Join me, and we can rule the galaxy as father and son." Ruling the galaxy -- the ultimate form of control.

But it is at this point, at last, that Luke begins to envision another form of being a man that does not involve destructive masculinity. Unlike Vader, who insists that his way of life is "the only way," Luke is able to release the aggression and resentment that has proved so damaging during this first confrontation, and literally releases his hold on the structure that is holding him up. He escapes Vader and his dark vision of manhood. When they meet again, he will not be so susceptible to that vision. Standing on the verge of achieving the

Sith's violent version of masculinity, urged on by the Emperor's "Take your father's place at my side!", Luke definitively throws away his weapon and all destructive notions of manhood with it.

So there is hope even when faced with the destructive cycle of father-son abuse. It need not be perpetuated; both fathers and sons can be healed. It is not an easy process, nor is it one without pain. In *Star Wars*, this is symbolized as Luke must watch his father die just when he is truly beginning to know and understand him. However, that knowledge will give him the strength to pass on a better legacy to future generations, not one of resentment and violence, but of the quiet strength and courage of true manhood.

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Issue 2

February 2007

Saving a Scoundrel: Han Solo and the Anti-hero's Journey
by Reihla

"Your friend is quite a mercenary. I wonder if he really cares about anything... or anybody."
~ Princess Leia, A New Hope

Hollywood films are full of heroes engaged in heroic journeys in the Campbellian sense of the phrase. Each protagonist follows a calling and is tested by the forces of evil as they seek to complete the quest that will fulfill their destiny. Without question, in the original trilogy of the *Star Wars* saga the protagonist and hero is Luke Skywalker, however much can also be learned by examining the character of Han Solo from a similar perspective.

Han plays a supporting role, pulling many of the Campbellian ingredients into Luke's hero's journey. He engineers the 'rescue from without' when he saves Luke in the trench battle. He brings in the 'animal familiar' in the form of Chewbacca. He shares 'the belly of the whale' with Luke in the Death Star trash compactor, and perhaps most importantly, he fills the role of shapeshifter – the archetypal character whose loyalties are ambiguous or changing. I believe his role in the original trilogy films is greater, though, than simply adding a few key ingredients to the monomyth mix.

Luke is clearly a hero in the traditional sense, with a story comprised of a departure, an initiation and a return. Han, in many ways is Luke's antithesis; his anti-hero, yet as such he undergoes his own heroic transformation and follows his own unique path to redemption. This paper will focus on the ways Han portrays a literary anti-hero, while also touching on aspects of his own heroic journey.

Wikipedia gives us a solid working definition of the term "anti-hero" by explaining that this character "has some characteristics that are antithetical to those of the traditional hero" and that he "will perform acts generally deemed 'heroic' but will do so with methods, manners or intentions that may not be heroic."[1]

When the audience is first introduced to Han there is nothing of the hero about him. We see a roguish pirate, pursued by dark forces and living on the fringes of society. As author Susan Mackey-Kallis defines the anti-hero, Han is "a protagonist who lacks the attributes that make a heroic figure, as nobility of mind and spirit, a life or attitude marked by action or purpose."[2] Han is a brash self-centered braggart – all of which are normally off-putting personality traits – and he is concerned primarily with financial profit and how he might benefit from it. In his world, he is surrounded by people he can't trust, people who would sell him out with very little reason. Ironically enough, these things are the very reason he finds our heroes of value and why he becomes of value to them.

Han's identity as the anti-hero of the original trilogy is the primary reason so many fans were up in arms about the edits director George Lucas made in subsequent releases of *A New Hope*. Much as Clint Eastwood's the Man with No Name (perhaps Hollywood's best known anti-hero), Han Solo has no problem being the one to shoot first in a situation where his life is threatened. It is this innate ability to go about doing the right thing in the wrong way that is at the core of an anti-hero. Han *has* to shoot first to be true to - and perhaps even to define - his character. Changing his response to one of self-defense changes his character on a visceral level and removes the moral ambiguity he represents at this stage of the film.

Kal Bishop, author of an on-line series called “Screenwriting and the Hero’s Journey” writes “the difference between hero, anti-hero and other variations simply lies in situation, motivation and result.”[3] The strongest point of contrast between Han and Luke initially is their motivation. Luke’s hero’s journey begins somewhat altruistically. He sets out to save a beautiful princess because, in the simplest terms, that is what heroes do. Han’s journey begins as he seeks money to save his own neck. It is marked by a complete lack of idealism and it is this lack that separates Han clearly from the wide-eyed wonder and naiveté that is Luke’s stock-in-trade.

As Han begins his journey with our hero we see him eschewing heroic concepts like spirituality or a belief in the greater good. He prefers luck and a good blaster to “hokey religions and ancient weapons.” He laughs derisively as he watches Luke practice with a lightsaber and takes his disdain a step further in his conversation with Obi-Wan Kenobi. It is in this conversation that he denies the concept of fate, saying “there’s no mystical energy field that controls my destiny.” Once again we see a clear delineation between Han’s principles and Luke’s.

Even after our party is captured by Imperials and learns that Princess Leia is being held prisoner nearby, Han has no inclination whatsoever to run to the aid of a damsel in distress. Luke pleads with Han to help him, insisting that if they don’t rescue her “she’ll be killed.” Han coldly replies “Better her than me.” This scene is the first, and perhaps the best, example to illustrate Han’s total devotion to himself. He doesn’t agree to help until Luke appeals to his selfish motives by pointing out that there will be tremendous financial gain to whoever rescues Leia.

Once the party has rescued the princess and reaches the rebel base, Han is quick to grab his promised reward and depart. He leaves Luke behind, disappointed by his new friend’s refusal to stay and fight for the noble cause. As a parting shot, Luke tells the older man to “take are of yourself, Han, but I guess that’s what you’re best at, isn’t it?” The audience, too, is taken off-guard by Han’s decision to leave the rebels in their hour of need. By that point they’ve come to care about the character despite his lack of heroic tendencies and his leaving fills them with a sense of disbelief. It is precisely this leaving that reaffirms Han’s position as the anti-hero.

It isn’t until the last few minutes of the trench battle that Han’s first step on the road to redemption becomes apparent. One of the highest points in the original trilogy is the moment where Vader’s tie fighter is blasted and spins off into space just before we see the familiar outline of the Millennium Falcon. This is our affirmation that Han is more than just an opportunist out to feed his own interests. The elation this turn of events inspires and the subsequent medal ceremony might lead us to believe that Han has already changed his selfish ways, however, in the opening of the next film we find him once-again determined to leave the rebel forces when they desperately need him.

While the truth is that Han must clear his name to avoid being killed, Leia sees this departure as a return to his former life as a smuggler. She treats him as if he is deliberately turning his back on his new friends and their cause. To some extent that is true. Noble as the cause of the Rebels is and as badly as he is needed, Han is still determined to look out for himself first. Han, in his own self-centered way, understands that Leia cares about him. Even so, her love isn’t sufficient motivation to keep him there, which is a stark contrast to the heroic, unwavering devotion Luke displays.

Han's transformation from anti-hero into hero begins in earnest when the Imperials attack the Rebel Base on Hoth. Once the assault begins Han does not simply leave as he said he would. He goes back after Leia, much to her surprise. In this fashion, Han has taken up Luke's hero's gauntlet, saving the Princess because it is the right thing to do. Perhaps, on some level, he is aware that he loves her even if he hasn't admitted it to her or to himself. Even then he does not abandon his plan to leave the rebels. He insists he will follow through once he's seen Leia safely to her own ship. Of course, in good dramatic form, these plans are thwarted and he is forced to take her with him

The next leg of the journey in Han's story is crucial as we watch the movie's heroine, Leia, battle with her romantic interest in this character. Ultimately she will be forced to admit that she loves Han despite the qualities he possesses which aren't particularly heroic. In one particular exchange, she admits to liking him when he isn't acting like a scoundrel. He insists that she likes him *because* he is a scoundrel. On some level, he recognizes that Leia is attracted to him because he isn't noble or heroic. This is an odd turn for the film to take… the romantic triumph of a scoundrel over a traditional hero, yet even before she knows Luke is her brother, she clearly prefers Han.

In the subsequent scenes we see Han evading the Imperials through a series of clever maneuvers that land him in the lap of an old friend and ally, Lando Calrissian. Once again, the anti-hero's archetype is fulfilled. As Kal Bishop puts it, "where the hero's allies will come to his aid, the anti-hero's allies will betray."[4] No place is this more evident than when we are surprised by Lando Calrissian's defection. In truth, this is Han's shady past catching up to him as he is passed into the hands of the very bounty hunters he has avoided since the original trilogy's outset.

It is worth noting, that even before he is handed over to the bounty hunter Han still planned to leave Leia and the rebels. Leia said it best when Han was reassuring her that they would soon be on their way when she replied "well, then, you're as good as gone, aren't you?" His responding silence is typically taken as agreement. Particularly telling is the scene in the carbon freeze chamber when, at the eleventh hour, Leia admits her love. Rather than replying in kind he chooses to continue his anti-hero's isolation.

At what point does Han become more hero than an anti-hero? To determine this we need to consider at what point he loses those traits that make him an anti-hero, most especially, his self-centered nature and his self-imposed isolation.

Some might feel Han loses his true isolation the moment he turns the Falcon around and goes back to fight in the first Death Star battle. I don't think this takes place until he truly accepts his place in his new circle of friends, shortly after his rescue from Jabba's Palace in *Return of the Jedi*. It isn't until after that point that Han eases into in his new roles: that of Leia's love and a rebel hero. It could be that it is only when his friends rescue him from the Jabba's palace that Han begins to realize the depth of their caring. This is especially true about Leia. Despite the objections she raised about Han leaving the rebellion when he was most needed, she herself didn't hesitate to put everything else on hold to go and rescue *him*. After all the saving Han had done, *he* is finally the one his friends rush to save. With so many years of self-imposed isolation behind him, that fact can't be lost on him. Once he realizes how much his friends care about him, what they would sacrifice to save him, then he finally understands that he truly is no longer alone. In a sense, he is reborn and is now free of the darker aspects of his past.

Even after he gains this understanding, he is reluctant to shed his selfish, scoundrel façade. It is possible that he truly is afraid Leia loves him only *because* he is a scoundrel. Perhaps he is reluctant to show her the new, more responsible side of his nature. Midway through *Return of the Jedi* Leia, despite being a ranking leader in the rebel forces, is surprised by the news that Han is now a General and intends to lead a strike team on the very dangerous mission to capture Endor's forest moon. Clearly Han is as reluctant to advertise his newfound heroic tendencies as he is to openly profess his love for Leia.

On the forest moon this tide changes. Leia disappears during a high speed chase and once Han is reunited with her their relationship is markedly different. He no longer approaches her with sarcasm. We see flashes of his selfish nature the moment he turns away from her while she reels from the shock of learning Luke is her brother. The audience, used to Han's self-centered reactions, is surprised but elated when he deliberately squashes this impulse to turn back to her and offer comfort.

In Archbishop Lazar Puhalo's paper on *Star Wars*, he writes that "The main hero-anti-hero of the series, Han Solo, is reformed and gradually converted to nobility by the direct influence of Luke Skywalker's moral purity and self-sacrificing love."[5] While Luke's influence is critical, I feel Han's conversion was due at least in equal measure to Leia Organa. The basic plot – an anti-hero being redeemed by love - comes close to mirroring the story of one of the first literary anti-heroes, Dostoevsky's underground man. This anti-hero was sarcastic and desperate, lacking a fundamental belief in the good of mankind. He became involved with a prostitute, then hypocritically lectured her about her lifestyle, then gave her his own address to invite further contact. She sought him out again but refused the money he tried to give her. In the end, his eyes were opened by her love and her nobility of spirit.[6]

Han is not in any way as repulsive a figure as Dostoevsky's character, but he is the same kind of paradox and we are clearly meant to question him from the outset. Han is meant to confuse us right up to the moment when we recognize that he has become a hero. Han's overall role in the saga is even more critical than this. His primary purpose, I believe, is to do what anti-heroes do best, to give the audience a character to identify with directly. John Fitch explains this well when he writes that "The anti-hero is often a reluctant savior – one that we follow and adore in spite of his own fallibility and his fundamentally flawed human nature."[7]

Author Victor Brombert takes it a step further and claims "The negative hero, more keenly perhaps than the traditional hero, challenges our assumptions, raising anew the question of how we see, or wish to see ourselves."[8] The audience identifies on a more personal level with an anti-hero than a hero because his flaws make him believable and real to us. In other words, in *Star Wars*, Luke Skywalker is an ideal. He is the hero we all *want* to be, whereas Han Solo is the hero we're convinced we *could* be.

Han's redemption underlines the heroism in the story. He shows conflicts between individual and collective values. He has resisted conformity, both by leaving the Empire (or so we are told) and by being reluctant to join the rebellion. He radically questions authority. He critiques rationalism and traditional values. He represents the common man who raises himself up to a place where ideals have value. He is redeemed by love and by his own choices. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, he reaffirms the human spirit in terms of resilience and tenacity.

For Luke Skywalker and Han Solo, the difference between the culminations of their journeys is significant. Luke becomes a true hero in the Campbellian sense by fulfilling his destiny. Han Solo finds the home his heart has been searching for and achieves a moral victory that makes him a better man. Both heroes are victorious and the audience cheers for both, but the latter is a more intimate victory, one that common man can relate to on a personal level.

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The Role of the Idealized Image in Anakin Skywalker's Transition to the Dark Side
by Scott Miller, MSW

George Lucas' use of the character of Anakin Skywalker/Darth Vader as a means to explore the meaning and symbolism of the tragic hero myth is particularly evident in *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith*. This episode conveys the final pieces of the story of an aspiring young man whose intense need for security leads him to fatally align himself with the antilibidinal forces of the Dark Side. It is therefore a key part of saga's identity as a modern myth, or monomyth, the numerous allusions to mythological and classical themes of which are apparent from multiple theoretical perspectives. The Campbellian emphasis on separation, initiation and return is apparent throughout the saga, and renders its plot particularly susceptible to comparative analysis along the lines of the hero's journey. A Jungian approach examines separation, initiation and return in the context of such basic primal categories as the Wise Old Man, Shadow and Anima/Animus, thus facilitating the study of the interconnectedness of the saga and other cultural myths, both past and present, according to universal archetypes associated with the collective unconscious. Freud's review of this collective unconscious, which he called archaic heritage, identified religiosity as the principle outcome of Man's defensive regression in the face death. His analysis of Moses' transition from Egyptian prince to Jewish rebel identifies the objective psyche as a repository of the collective memory of the murdered primeval Father, thereby raising oedipal themes very similar to those laid out in the canon of the saga.

It is clear, then, that the saga is susceptible to many interpretations, none of which may be said to take literal presence over the others. *Revenge* differs from the rest of the saga, however, in that it reveals a more interpersonal application of Lucas' vision, one that allows for a closer examination of the psychology of its key mythical characters. Nowhere is this more evident than in *Revenge's* portrayal of the process of neurosis and growth in the character of Anakin Skywalker, who despite his seemingly limitless intellectual and physical potential is plagued by behavioral impulsivity, emotional dysregulation and unsatisfactory interpersonal relationships. In this way *Revenge* is susceptible to an interpersonal psychoanalytic analysis. Such an approach offers to provide a deeper understanding of the unconscious forces that facilitated Anakin's transition to the Dark Side, particularly the roles of and conflicts between his egosyntonic idealized image and his egodystonic true self. Such an analysis suggests Anakin's transition to the Dark Side, which is seen as directly related to his fascination in becoming the indestructible, all-powerful warrior-hero, is not due to cosmic predetermination, but to an unconscious striving for security via an idealized image rooted in an unconscious sadistic need to control.

A brief review of Anakin's origins quickly reveals the etiology of this insecurity and its subsequent behavioral and intrapsychaic trends. The son of a slave woman, Anakin Skywalker is currently one of the most powerful Jedi in the galaxy. His Jedi teacher, Obi-Wan Kenobi, views him as the Chosen One, or the prodigal Jedi who will bring peace and order back to the galaxy. Indeed, Anakin's superb physical and intellectual abilities suggest an innate, almost messianic strength. Nevertheless, he suffers from intrapsychic and interpersonal deficits that speak to his humanity and mortality. As a child he was forced to find his way in the world without the guidance of a father figure, and during young adulthood he experienced the premature loss of his mother. Anakin's status as a Jedi offered him the chance to avenge his mother's death and the ongoing ability to protect others like her from similar fates. He remains plagued by feelings of insecurity, however,

and uses his position to demand respect from those he saves and as a means to consolidate his personal and political power.

Time and again Anakin's behavior puts him at odds with his adopted family, the Jedi Knights. The Jedi emphasis on peace and justice is congruent with Anakin's values, but their belief in restraint and a monastic lifestyle conflicts with his impulsivity and social position as a husband and father-to-be. When the Jedi council denies him the title Jedi Master, Anakin experiences their decision as a parent's failure to uphold a promise and as disregard for his professional potential. In response, he turns to Chancellor Palpatine, an alternative father figure into whom Anakin's ego and libidinal energies are cathected. Palpatine offers to provide Anakin the means to avert the imagery put forth in his allegedly prophetic dreams, which suggest his wife, Padme, will die during childbirth. In so doing, Anakin associates himself with the Dark Side, a part of the force that consolidates and validates the feelings, morals and behaviors Anakin views as key to the actualization of a secure self.

Anakin's transition to the dark side is facilitated through the actualization of an idealized image via classical moving against behavior. According to Horney's neo-Freudian school, the idealized image is a set of inauthentic behaviors, beliefs and goals that are unconsciously formulated in response to interpersonal events that elicit feelings of insecurity. Anakin's idealized image emphasizes power and shuns introspection, restraint and humility. It prefers the rigidity of moral absolutes to free choice and displays a narcissistic preference for sameness. Anakin's idealized image is rooted in an unconscious sadistic need to control that resulted from the premature death of his mother and its resultant feelings of inadequacy and insecurity. This is apparent in Anakin's dream imagery, which includes manifest images of his wife's impending death and suggests excessive feelings of guilt, a desire for revenge and a latent belief that he is incapable of assuming the paternal role of protector, perhaps related to the fact that he lacked a father figure as a child.

The gradual actualization of Anakin's idealized image begins when he murders Count Dooku. This act conflicts with the moral code of the Jedi knights and sets the stage for his eventual conversion to the Dark Side. After killing Dooku, Anakin is immediately remorseful. Chancellor Palpatine offers him absolution by concluding that the need to neutralize the political threat Dooku posed justified Anakin's impulsive act despite its being incongruent with the stipulations of the Jedi Code. Anakin's acceptance of this defense speaks to his nascent belief that the Jedi Code, with its emphasis on introspection and restraint, inhibits those behaviors that are most likely to provide him with a sense of security. Rejecting the Jedi Code enables him to avoid the personal responsibility associated with free choice and allows him to engage in unchecked expressions of anger that increase his feelings of strength and security. The murder of Count Dooku therefore shows Anakin how the Dark Side can offer him a respite from the anxiety induced by his chronic inability to consistently apply the Force in a manner that satisfies the moral obligations of the Jedi code and his personal desire for revenge.

Following Dooku's death, Anakin officially begins his apprenticeship to Palpatine. This relationship is the basis of Anakin's final move towards his idealized image, a major part of which grew out of the feelings of insecurity that resulted from a childhood devoid of a protective father figure. Anakin's idealized image places great emphasis on power, strength and other qualities typically associated with masculinity. It categorically rejects such stereotypical feminine traits as introspection and restraint by externalizing them onto others, who are increasingly viewed as worthless and expendable. Anakin's slaughter of

the Jedi younglings reflects his sadistic tendency to externalize blame onto those in whom he sees unacceptable parts of himself. A less dramatic but equally powerful example of this is seen in Anakin's falling out with his former teacher, Obi-Wan Kenobi. Obi-Wan represents those aspects of the Jedi movement Anakin sees as weak, threatening and disappointing. He reminds Anakin of the narcissistic injury the Jedi instilled when they denied him the title Jedi Master and comes to be seen as a threat to the actualization of Anakin's idealized image.

We see, then, that as the plot unfolds Anakin becomes more interested in the rigid application of his idealized image and less focused on the moral and societal issues that initially attracted him to the Jedi cause. When disappointments and betrayals reveal the inauthenticity of this image, Anakin succumbs to feelings of self-hatred, particularly whenever he is obliged to engage in challenges where his true self may reveal its inadequacies vis-à-vis the narcissistic expectations of his idealized image. To such challenges Anakin responds with defensive disavowal, employing sadism, externalization and other means which misdirect his ego and libidinal energies into the Dark side as represented by Palpatine, who seems a narcissistic alternative ego-ideal. As his psyche succumbs to the toxicity of this artificial image, so too does his body, which falls prey to the dissolution of metal and machines.

In *Revenge*, we see Anakin as we have never seen him before; He is a man in the fullest physical sense of the word who possesses the power of Darth Vader and the emotional complexity of a youth no longer protected by the innocence of latency. *Revenge* is therefore unique in that it portrays an intermittent period of Anakin's life that might seem insignificant due to its brevity and simplicity in the face of the saga's more colorful depiction of mythological archetypes, but nevertheless offers the most complete picture we have of Anakin's overall personality. We see an Anakin whose memories of the past influence his actions of the present and color his hopes for the future. We watch him as he struggles with the personal responsibility associated with free choice and lives with the thoughts, feelings and behaviors induced by an authentic erotic fascination. Such emotions are not to be seen again until Episode VI when, after years of repressing any striving for pleasure, he becomes unable to handle his drives when the repressed returns and longs for an erotic abandonment in death. An interpersonal analysis of Anakin's neuroses can therefore be said to offer greater understanding of the unconscious forces that facilitated his transition to the Dark Side. It suggests the film's outcome is not related to cosmic predetermination, a specific archetype, or even the entropy of Thanatos. Rather, Anakin's succumbing to the Dark Side is related to his need for security, an obsession whose origins reside in the interpersonal deficits of his childhood, specifically his mother's untimely death and his lack of a father figure. The resultant compensatory need to re-establish a sense of control is at the root of his unconscious sadistic need to control, his narcissism and his tendency to externalize blame. These parts of Anakin's idealized image are similar to the values and behaviors espoused by the Dark Side, and facilitate his transition from Anakin to Darth Vader.

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Issue 3

March 2007

Star Wars, Lensman, and Superheroes

by Keith Palmer

Much effort has been devoted over the years to identifying the inspirations, influences, and homages folded into the *Star Wars* saga. The range of works pointed out, though, stretching from world folklore and myth to the Western[1] and other forms of pop culture, may reflect on the varying interests of those making the suggestions. Where some film buffs look to movies from *The Hidden Fortress*[2] to *The Dam Busters*[3] and others begin with the Flash Gordon serials[4] and the comic strips they were based on, readers of science fiction turn to those books to find predecessors to *Star Wars*.

One science fiction series often mentioned is the "Lensman" novels of E.E. "Doc" Smith, first serialised in John W. Campbell's *Astounding Stories* (later *Astounding Science Fiction*), starting in 1937. As early as 1977, an article on Smith was reprinted with the title "E.E. 'Doc' Smith, Father of *Star Wars*,"[5] and the connection continues to be drawn today. The Wikipedia entry on Smith's series suggests the resemblance,[6] and there is a page devoted to it, alongside ones on Flash Gordon and *The Hidden Fortress*, on a web site attempting to identify as many influences on *Star Wars* as possible.[7] At a remove from simple fan interest, an entry on the Lensman series in *The Multimedia Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* describes it as "a cosmic war of Good and Evil, which even George Lucas would be hard put to top."[8]

George Lucas may have provided a subtle acknowledgement of these suggestions himself. In documentary footage filmed as he began writing the script of *The Phantom Menace* and showing a glimpse of one of his bookshelves, in between books by Leigh Brackett and Edgar Rice Burroughs and copies of "100 Great Operas and their stories" and Caesar's "The Gallic War" and "The Civil War," is the first Lensman book to be written as such, "Galactic Patrol."[9]

To proclaim one central inspiration for *Star Wars* simplifies things too much no matter what's chosen, though. There are definite points of similarity between the Lensman series and the *Star Wars* saga in their clashes of interstellar dreadnoughts and their fast-paced, planet-hopping adventures of heroes equipped with psychic powers, but where the battles of the Galactic Patrol are on a scale Industrial Light & Magic might have difficulty bringing to the screen even now, the characters of *Star Wars* struggle with ambiguities the Lensmen brush off when they do have to face them.

The opening line of the Lensman series, as now ordered after the writing of two novels that fill in the backstory, does hold an echo of "A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away...": "Two thousand million or so years ago two galaxies were colliding; or, rather, were passing through each other."[10] One of these galaxies is our own, though, and the backstory proceeds from that indefinite time in the past to our own future; the detachment from our own history for the sake of mythology and "fairy tale" that George Lucas sought in the end isn't an issue for the science fiction of the Lensman series.[11] Stars themselves do not collide as the galaxies move through each other, the empty space between them being sufficient for them to pass, but the Earth (or "Tellus," as it's often named in the series) is among the numberless planets whose formation in each galaxy follows these encounters.

All of these events have been observed by the Arisians, a species already ancient and mentally powerful, "carefree, busy, absorbedly intent",[12] until one of them detects the

Eddorians. Interlopers from another, less fortunate universe, the Eddorians have turned from destructive but finally futile battles against each other to searching for worlds enough for all of them to control. "Intolerant, domineering, rapacious, insatiable, cold, callous, and brutal," but to make matters worse also "keen, capable, persevering, analytical, and efficient," the Eddorians have "no trace of any of the softer emotions or sensibilities possessed by races adherent to Civilization."[13] This is more than enough for many descriptions of the Lensman series to use descriptions like "absolute Evil"[14] and "the nastiest, slimiest, most thoroughly rotten beings ever imagined"[15] for the Eddorians, although the Arisians are in fact a little less extreme, declaring at one point "Your mental picture of glaring white and of unrelieved black is not a true picture. Neither absolute evil nor absolute good do or can exist."[16] With the two sides culminating in two separate species, not in the Force with its Dark Side, psychic power in the Lensman series is drawn from within an individual. The risk of committing acts connected to the Dark Side that the Jedi have to deal with doesn't seem to exist for the Lensmen.

The Arisians are not troubled by a lack of absolutes, though, and they defend themselves against the threats of the Eddorians by erasing all knowledge of themselves from the minds of their enemies. Aware they're not powerful enough to destroy the very strongest of the Eddorians even so, they set about raising a force among the species evolving from "Arisian spores" able to do this. Although unaware of this plan at first, the Eddorians do manage to interfere; the sinking of Atlantis (in a nuclear war) and the fall of the Roman republic are both due to the machinations of Gharlane of Eddore, accused by an Arisian of also having been "Genghis Khan and Attila and the Kaiser and Mussolini and Hitler and the Tyrant of Asia".[17] When the Eddorians finally become aware of the Arisians after "World War III" and the reconstruction that follows, they change their plans by establishing a vast, layered hierarchy using military force disguised as space piracy, the criminal drug trade, and other subversive activities against Galactic Civilization, a hierarchy that becomes known as "Boskonia." At last, though, Virgil Samms's search for a badge of police office impossible to counterfeit produces a suggestion from an Arisian in human form to travel to Arisia, where he becomes the First Lensman. Most of the characters through most of the novels know the enemy only as "Boskone," and some attempts to draw connections between the Lensmen series and *Star Wars* have pointed to the second draft of A New Hope, where the dark side of the Force is called "the Bogan" and a "good side" is also specifically identified with the name "the Ashla"[18], suggesting a similarity of names between them and "Boskone" and "Arisia."[19]

As an organization of lawmen-warriors, drawn from the best of all species adherent to Galactic Civilization, the Lensmen play a role very similar to the Jedi. The Lensmen, though, are in some ways more in control, more matter-of-fact, and more idealised than the Jedi have ever been presented as. Their identifying mark is the eponymous Lens, "a lenticular jewel fabricated of hundreds of tiny, dead-white gems."[20] When worn (in wristwatch fashion by humans) by the being the Arisians made it for, a Lens becomes "a lenticular polychrome of writhing, almost fluid radiance which proclaimed to all observers in symbols of ever-changing flame that here was a Lensman of the GALACTIC PATROL."[21] A Lens will kill any enemy who takes it from a Lensman and tries to wear it, though, and as such serves as a sure proof of identity, aiding in proving "beyond question that every Lensman was in fact incorruptible."[22] Most tests of that quality alluded to in the books seem to be bribery with money and drugs, and one agent of Boskone, her feminine wiles frustrated against a Lensman, calls him "a sublimated Boy Scout."[23] As a result of their incorruptibility, though, the Lensmen appear to control the lightly developed government of Galactic Civilization, of which we're informed "that in all the long history of Civilization no planet whose people have ever voted to adhere to Civilization has ever withdrawn from

it."[24] The people of Civilization, aware that they're led by the wise people Anakin Skywalker once contemplated being given the power to do the right thing, never stop believing in democracy as the people of the Republic once did.

Beyond the useful property of identification, a Lens acts as an instrument of mental communication and translation, but is not a weapon in itself. Lensmen instead use the same weapons as the rest of the Galactic Patrol, handguns called "DeLameters" with a definite resemblance to blasters and all the other bulletless energy weapons of science fiction and "space-axes", "a combination and sublimation of battle-axe, mace, bludgeon, and lumberman's picaroon, a massively needle-pointed implement of potentialities limited only by the physical strength and bodily agility of its wielder."[25] With these weapons, it's perhaps little wonder that "Lensmen always went in",[26] human Lensmen at least, and that exuberance matches that of the Jedi when Qui-Gon Jinn and Obi-Wan Kenobi duel Darth Maul, the Jedi enter combat on Geonosis, and Obi-Wan Kenobi battles General Grievous. At times, too, the Lensmen also get into more trouble than they can handle.

With the facts established that Lensmen can't be tempted and Civilization is very hard to shake, the action continues at full speed into the central novels of the series. Kimball Kinnison graduates first in his class of "Tellurian" Lensmen, once one of one million eighteen-year-old cadets, now one of a hundred left after five years of "the most brutally rigid, the most fiendishly thorough process of elimination that it has been possible to develop."[27] This training is intentional; the Arisians explained to Virgil Samms that Lensmen could make the selection "among babies in their cradles,"[28] an echo of the selection process implied for Jedi, but those who wash out "for some reason not involving moral turpitude"[29] serve to staff the rest of the Galactic Patrol, uniformed like the Lensmen in "space-black and silver".[30] Kinnison is thrown into action at once against the space pirates of Boskone, and is soon elevated to the level of "Gray Lensman," "as nearly absolutely free an agent as it is possible for a living, flesh-and-blood creature to be."[31] He objects, thinking himself unworthy of this load, but as is typical for the rest of the books his senior officers are quick to reassure him of his talents; a clear distinction from the tensions that sometimes exist between the Jedi Order and protagonists such as Qui-Gon Jinn, Obi-Wan Kenobi, Anakin Skywalker, and Luke Skywalker.

When Kinnison finds it necessary to develop new skills after diving into too much trouble and nearly being killed, he becomes the first Lensman to return to Arisia. Under the ready tutelage of the Arisian Mentor, his Lens becomes more than just an identifier and a communicator; he develops the "sense of perception"[32] that some species of Lensmen have and the ability to control and, if necessary, destroy minds. He doesn't, however, have the "telekinetic" ability of Jedi; when facing adversaries defended by "mechanical thought-screens," he has to find and control nearby animals to disable those screens. Kinnison ultimately becomes powerful enough that he can remove his Lens and still use his powers, his mind "able to work without aid"[33], the better to continue infiltrating Boskonia in a variety of disguises. In this, the Lens becomes somewhat more like the Force-amplifying "Kiber Crystal" in the second and third drafts of Star Wars, an idea George Lucas took out in the end because "It was better to make the Force more ethereal than to have it solidified in a thing like the crystal."[34]

At the close of each novel, Kinnison and the Lensmen behind him utterly destroy who they believe to be the rulers of Boskone, in what "of stern necessity had to be, a war of utter, complete, and merciless extinction".[35] This harsh fate, unquestioned by the Lensmen, is faced by space fleet and alien base world alike, although Kinnison does manage to arrange for some humans and some human planets to break free from Boskonia and join

Civilization. As each novel that follows these apocalyptic conclusions opens, investigation reveals a new level of menace surviving behind the erstwhile rulers, to be plumbed further and then defeated using weapons that escalate from fleets of starships controlled so as to utterly overwhelm their opponents, to "negaspheres" that swallow worlds in mutual annihilation, to planets shifted across interstellar space to crush enemy worlds between them, to turning the solar system into a vacuum tube and concentrating the energy of the Sun against the surfaces of armed and armoured mobile worlds. These worlds have a definite similarity to the Death Star, although they're destroyed so quickly that they don't quite offer the threat or the opportunity for the heroes to test themselves against that the Death Star embodies.

The steady escalation of scale in threat, response, and ability, "the conviction of the existence of level upon level of potential being and becoming"[36], is often suggested to be a central appeal of the Lensmen series. There may be an echo of this in the forces that destroyed the Republic in *Star Wars*, from the Trade Federation that occupied one planet becoming a part of a larger army of Separatists, and the defeat of the Separatists revealing that the Sith lords guiding them were also controlling and subverting the Republic. Unfortunately, a full awareness of what they're facing comes too late for the Jedi to act on it before they're all but destroyed themselves.

During his adventures, Kinnison falls in love with Clarrissa MacDougall, a Galactic Patrol nurse, a descendent of Virgil Samms, and much more thoughtful than the usual run of socialites attracted to the glamour of the plain gray leather a Gray Lensman wears. This romance is in fact encouraged by his superiors: "such stock was altogether too good not to be propagated."[37] Kinnison is resistant at first, worried that his risky career makes long-term attachment troublesome in its own way, but yields in the end. This is a definite difference with the marriage of Anakin Skywalker and Padme Amidala, who kept it a secret; the wedding of Kimball Kinnison and Clarrissa MacDougall is broadcast "to every planet of Civilization."[38]

On his own initiative but with the full compliance of the Arisians, Kinnison makes Clarrissa the first female Lensman ever in order for her to better investigate a planet ruled by a matriarchy: it had been established at the formation of the Lensmen that "Women's minds and Lenses don't fit"; they have to be worn by "Men with tremendous force, drive, and scope", "No more to be stopped than a glacier, and twice as hard and ten times as cold."[39] Clarrissa, though, had been foreseen at that time, as "some kind of a freak."[40] While she is successful as a Lensman, she thinks of herself as "a synthetic--or an imitation--or a sort of amateur--maybe a 'Red' Lensman",[41] which helps endear her to the rest of the Galactic Patrol. This, and the wedding that follows, fits the plans of the Arisians, who can foresee the future through their "Visualization of the Cosmic All."[42] As with the marriage of Anakin and Padme, the "Children of the Lens" are necessary to resolve matters, although in a very direct way. Kimball Kinnison and Clarrissa MacDougall represent the penultimate stage of the first Arisian scheme of advancement to reach completion, and their five grown children, one man and four women, use the full power of the Galactic Patrol without the Patrol ever quite knowing what their final adversaries are to eradicate the Eddorians and then take over stewardship of Civilization from the Arisians as the story comes to a close.

Both the Lensman series and the *Star Wars* saga have their own peculiarities and their own strengths, but those strengths are not identical. Both stories are in a sense products of their times, but *Star Wars* is not just a "modern" deconstruction of the certainties of the Lensman series. Instead, the Lensman series can be seen as one of many inspirations for

the *Star Wars* saga, and can be sought out and read not just for that but for its own unique, antique appeal.

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Issue 4

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Palpatine on Parliment Square: Francis Urquhart and the *Star Wars Saga*
by Sean Dineen

"You might very well think, that I couldn't possibly comment." (Dobbs 56)
"I am the Senate!" (Stover 231)

The previous quotes represent two evil political geniuses at the height of their powers: fictional British Prime Minster Francis Urquhart, a character in three novels by Michael Dobbs, and the Dark Lord of the Sith Darth Sidious from the Star Wars movies. These two men are remarkable in the similarities of their careers and methodology, despite one being placed in an unknown time and galaxy and the other holding sway of a nation state upon this earth in the late 20th century. Their ultimate fates, reaping destruction after a blood soaked career of inflicting it, are also similar. Both men rise in societies in trouble and seeking a strong hand, or what noted political scientists call the "bullets and bread approach", to maintain stability at a terrible price to liberty and the public good.

Democracy requires patience, balance and compromise, just like the light side of the Force. These men feed on greed, lust for power, and fear to impose their own dictatorial order: the Emperor with Dark Side powers, Urquhart with the darkness within the democratic system and his non-magical but no less evil power to discern flaws in men and women's hearts and feed off them. Both men begin their rise in the role of helpful functionaries, Palpatine as Senator from Naboo and Urquhart as "Chief Whip", a Conservative Party official behind the scenes. "Urquhart had been in government longer than most of his colleagues. He had become known as someone who could be discreet." (Dobbs 27) His knowledge of the flaws of his compatriots becomes invaluable for manipulation.

His talents, and they are considerable, are not given sufficient recognition by Prime Minster Henry Collingridge, a naive good hearted man very similar to Chancellor Valorum at the beginning of *The Phantom Menace*. This is very similar to the manner in which Anakin is treated by the Jedi Council, but Urquhart is older and is master, not apprentice.

Collingridge's lack of reward inflames Urquhart, who sets in motion an evil plan to wrest power into his hands. He recruits two pawns: the drug addicted publicity chairman Roger O'Neill and the impressionable political correspondent who will become his lover and second murder victim, Ms. Mattie Storen.

O'Neill is forced to plant false information to discredit Collingridge under the threat of his drug habit being exposed. As Urquhart reminds him, "I am going to bail you out Roger, and in return I want your complete unquestioning loyalty to me personally not the chairman." (Dobbs 42) Later, when O'Neill balks at using his own girlfriend to seduce Patrick Woolton, Urquhart's rival in the cabinet, the reptilian leader barks, "Don't be coy with me, you know I could have you in the gutter any time I like." (Dobbs 58). This is very similar to Palpatine's boast aboard the second Death Star to Luke Skywalker: "You, like your father, are now mine." (Kahn 108)

The method used to entrap Mattie Storen is far more subtle: she is given inside information to boost her career and slowly seduced.

Urquhart's repeated mantra like phrase, "Can I trust you, Mattie?" and her sensual response, "You know you can." (Dobbs 109) casts a dark side spell on the spirit of a

woman starved for love. Urquhart would have approved of Palpatine's dismissal of the Queen of Naboo. "Queen Amidala is young and naive, you will find controlling her will not be difficult." (Brooks 112). After Urquhart fears Mattie has been digging too closely into his affairs, he forces O'Neil to throw a rock through her window, then transforms himself into a sympathetic friend. "I couldn't bear to think of anything happening to you." (Dobbs 309) His "Fatherly" approach even carries over into their lovemaking. After chastening Mattie for snooping into his affairs, he boasts of his power as they make love. "Playing with hopes and dreams of a daughter, now gentle, now hard, rebuking and rewarding, chastising and forgiving, what greater power is there? Why should I yearn to be everybody's Daddy?" (Dobbs 178) Palpatine employs a deft touch in creating the threat of the Naboo blockade while using it to lead to his election as Chancellor. His approach to finding recruits for his inner circle is equally as clever.

While Maul was brainwashed from birth, Count Dooku and Anakin Skywalker are enticed with the promise of power, in the Count's case to repair a flawed republic and in young Skywalker's case to save his illicit wife. He exploits the future Darth Vader's need for nurturing, referring to him as son and the most gifted Jedi he had ever met.

At the end of *The Phantom Menace*, Palpatine is Chancellor; Urquhart is Prime Minister at the end of his first novel, *House of Cards*.

They both have lost their apprentices: Urquhart has thrown Mattie off the roof and poisoned Roger O'Neal's cocaine, while Darth Maul has been dispatched by Obi Wan Kenobi. They look and find replacements in the disaffected around them. Urquhart's villainy is encouraged and supported by his Lady Macbeth-style wife Elizabeth, who encourages him to seek out Sarah Harding, a mistress of this generation's Dark Side: the public opinion poll. As the second chapter of the English trilogy, *To Play the King*, opens, Ms. Harding is working her way into the prime minister's inner circle as he fights a new enemy, a King who desires real influence on his government and new politics: "Is it not too late to seek a better way, to temper economic rigor with a good deal more respect for human value?" (Dobbs 117)

This will not do: Urquhart can have no rivals. "I cannot and will not tolerate a monarch, who is openly and bitterly opposed to me. To preserve the ideal of a constitutional monarchy, I now demand your abdication." (Dobbs 337)

alpatine meanwhile has made Dooku his new right hand while waiting for Anakin's love to bloom into the need for power. He deliberately brings Padme and Anakin together, and constantly puts himself forward as the loving parent figure in place of his martyred mother and the Jedi Council leaders who give Anakin orders. "You don't need guidance, in time you will learn to trust your feelings, then you will be invincible." (Salavatore 76) Later he encourages Anakin to take revenge on Dooku: "Kill him now, It wasn't the first time." (Stover 44)

Sarah Harding is both awed and terrified at the range of Urquhart's power and iron will: "It's as if he carries around this personal force field of will about with him." (Dobbs 134) She is horrified when he explains a new plan to conscript unemployed youth to redress the balance of trade, and with his stone cold remarks, "No one wants these young people, not even their own parents. They have no skills, no education, no self discipline, they are utterly useless! We are going to make them useful." (Dobbs 403)

Even one as hard nosed as she appears can't stomach this, so she too must go, blown up in a car bomb along with Tim Stamper, Urquhart's Tarkin figure who had suddenly jumped ship with evidence of past sins.

By the end of *Attack of the Clones* Palpatine has orchestrated everything to his delight: his term in office is secure and the Death Star is being planned. Anakin's fears and strength are both coming to the forefront. Both leaders will ultimately learn as Yoda says, "Faith in their new apprentices, misplaced may be." (Stover 334)

As the third book, *The Final Cut,* unfolds, Urquhart sets his sights on a comfortable retirement, orchestrating a peace settlement between the Greek and Turkish presidents of Cyprus to enshrine his name in history and give oil rights to a friend.

But his cunning seems to have failed him.

His Parliamentary Private Secretary Clare Carlson, former mistress of his last rival Tom Makepeace, has found a tape of his past murders and will use it against him. The world is changing and even he realizes he can no longer adapt with it. He declares his fear in saga-like terms: " The fear, fear in the smell of damp newsprint and the crackle of the radio, fear that this might be the day we wake to find the magic gone." (Dobbs 223)

Because he has a loving if evil wife, he will be spared the shame of direct betrayal. She organizes an euthanasia type assassination to safe him. Anakin becomes evil for love and so does she. He dies cradled in her lap, a far more generous end than exploding into Dark Side energy aboard the second Death Star.

Just prior to his death, Urquhart and his wife stare at a statue of Margaret Thatcher, whom he has just overtaken. It is very much like the end of *Revenge of the Sith* where Tarkin, the Emperor and the newly mechanized Vader look out at the Death Star. Here, then, are two great examples of the unfolding of power and its ultimate ramifications.

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Issue 5

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Where Loyalties Lie
by ami-padme

"He's loyal to people*, not principals."*
Obi-Wan Kenobi, The Revenge of the Sith *novelization*[1]

Loyalty may not be the first trait that most people would choose to associate with Anakin Skywalker. Best known for his tragic fall to the Dark Side and transformation into the iconic villain Darth Vader, the word more likely to be associated with Anakin is betrayal. Betrayal of the Republic regarding his role in the ascendancy of the Empire, betrayal of the Jedi Order regarding his role in its near-total destruction, as well as betrayal of his loved ones and himself.

While acknowledging that, it is important to note that Anakin is a fiercely loyal person, and in fact, that trait -- unchecked and improperly dealt with -- was almost certainly part of his descent to the Dark Side. More positively, it also played a role in his eventual redemption. The key to understanding Anakin in this regard is seeing that he is almost exclusively loyal to people, to those he personal cares about. He is not loyal to institutions, or to ideas. His focus on the people he cares about leads him to turn on the Republic, the Jedi Order, and their principles, and that focus is eventually twisted to the point of him hurting his loved ones as well. But his later focus on his son, which makes him betray the Sith and Empire, is key to his return to the Light Side of the Force.

"For Anakin," Obi-Wan said at length, "there is nothing more important than friendship. He is the most loyal man I have ever met—loyal beyond reason, in fact…I think," Obi-Wan said carefully, "that abstractions like peace *don't mean much to him…I am firmly convinced Anakin can do anything. Except betray a friend."*[2]

The dictionary lists three definitions for the word "loyal," with two relevant to the discussion of Anakin Skywalker. The first describes it as "faithfulness to commitments or obligations." The second talks about "faithful adherence to a sovereign, government, leader, [or] cause."[3]

Anakin is certainly lacking in the second definition. He has little attachment to the Republic he is sworn to serve during the prequel era, his closeness to Palpatine based on friendship rather than on devotion to the position of Chancellor, and aside from generally restoring order by ending the Clone Wars, Anakin does not seem very concerned with the motivations of the Separatists or how they conflict with those of the Republic. He is dismissive of democracy's ideals, and focuses on its inefficiencies (based on his conversation with Padmé in *Attack of the Clones*), possibly because his early exposure to governance came in the form of a corrupt kleptocracy on Tatooine. Later, he shows possibly even less concern for the Empire -- in Episode IV, while the officers speak repeatedly about Imperial power, control, and supremacy, Vader says nothing, or expresses how generally unimpressed he is. By *Empire*, he has begun to plot against the Emperor (he is secretly looking for his son, and tells Luke that he can destroy Palpatine), and by the end of the saga has turned on the Empire and its leader. Though he often pays lip service to supporting both the Republic and the Empire -- usually when he is in the process of betraying them, particular in *Jedi* and *Sith* -- it is clear that there is little emotional connection or importance placed on those institutions or their leaders by Anakin.

The Jedi and Sith Orders are not government entities, but are extremely intertwined with them, and are long-standing institutions with their own sets of principles and with their own adherents. Anakin expresses some level of loyalty to both, especially the Jedi, but that does not fully compare to his loyalty to people. He does not ascribe to the Jedi-defined ideal of compassion, or to its corollary requirement of non-attachment. He makes no secret of his ongoing love and concern for his mother, and decides to romantically pursue Padmé as soon as he has the opportunity. He is quite devoted to his personal definition of compassion -- "unconditional love" -- which is important to how Anakin and Vader function throughout the films. But his take on the subject is seriously at odds with the prequel Jedi take, even if he chooses to blur the distinctions in order to allow himself his relationships while remaining a Jedi. The Order, as a rule, pledges itself to the service of the Republic, but Anakin, as stated, does not truly support the government. As a child in Episode I, he clearly idealizes and admires the Jedi; in *Clones* he angrily attacks Count Dooku on behalf of the Jedi killed in the earlier battle; in Episode III, he speaks to Palpatine about Jedi selflessness during the infamous opera scene. He is likely sincere in any such instance where he shows loyalty to the Jedi in the prequels. And yet, when he is forced to choose between the Order and his wife (a quick distillation of the various circumstances surrounding his fall), there is little surprise when he chooses his wife, because his positive feelings toward the Jedi are complicated by his disagreements with them, which interfere with his desire to be a "good" Jedi, or to be a Jedi at all. As with the Empire, Anakin shows much less loyalty to the Sith. He plans to overthrow Palpatine just after his turn, and during the original trilogy uses Sith philosophy mainly to tempt and confuse Luke, or refers to himself as a trapped, almost slavish follower of the Dark Side of the Force and of the Emperor. It is understandble how someone -- when looking at the Republic, Jedi, Empire, and Sith -- might conclude that Anakin is a disloyal person.

However, this does not take into account the broader implications of the first definition of the word "loyalty," or the concept's origins. Wikipedia states that loyalty originally arose from closeness to one's family and tribe, "where the prospect of the whole casting out the individual seems like the ultimate, unthinkable rejection."[4]

Once Anakin's twisted path has led him fully astray in *Sith*, he is most angered and hurt at Padmé's rejection of his actions, and of his justifications that he has done everything to save her. Luke's similar rejection in Episode V pushes him the other way -- for the first time in the film, Vader does not violently lash out at his subordinates, and merely walks away from everyone. He does not kill anyone again (until Palpatine) after his son's escape. His last, dying words are dedicated to his daughter accepting him after he passes on. Anakin's loyalty is elemental -- his family is the center of it all, and even at his darkest moment, he needs to be convinced that he is acting in his wife and child's best interest, and that she, in fact, has betrayed him by not understanding his point of view. It is only the final loss of Padmé that seals Anakin's fate, until his son comes into his life, giving him a family to evoke his fierce loyalty once again.

The first dictionary definition mentions commitments and obligations. Anakin, particularly in the prequels, creates a situation where he has made multiple, serious commitments, nearly all of which are in conflict and competition with one other. After Qui-Gon frees him, he pledges himself to the path of becoming a Jedi. He promises his slave mother that he will return to his home planet of Tatooine to free her. He makes a commitment to Padmé through his secret marriage to her. He has an automatically implied duty of fatherhood to his unborn child. He has pledged to defend the Republic against the Separatists and other enemies. In *Sith*, he is put in the position of essentially promising both the Jedi and Palpatine to watch and begin to help working against the other. He later follows the

Emperor, but makes Luke a series of offers and promises should his son choose to join him.

Anakin compels himself to try to spread his loyalty in as many different directions as he can, perhaps because he thinks he has the ability to be successful at it, or because he believes some of the dichotomies are false and impossible to address (for example, why can't he be a Jedi that loves his mother; how is he supposed to choose?). Unfortunately for Anakin, this tension leads him to breaking points that end tragically. When he loses his mother, he temporarily loses his senses, and commits a mass murder. When Padmé is threatened, he helps destroy the Jedi on the chance that he might be able to save her, and indirectly causes her death after all. Even when he makes the right choice, and resolves the tension between his son and the Emperor by redeeming himself, the decision comes at the high cost of his own life. But finally, the problem of being loyal to the Jedi and to his family is dealt with, as Luke strongly appeals to Anakin's love for his son and his position as a fallen Jedi, offering him something he, perhaps, had been looking for since he was a small child -- a way to fulfill both his duties as a member of a family and of the Jedi Order.

Anakin's fall, as morally horrific as it was, was not truly due to a lack of loyalty as much as it was a twisting of a strong, emotional bond with those he cared for. Being shown a way to answer that conflict, between people and institutions, love and other high ideals, led to redemption for Anakin, the Jedi, the Republic, and the galaxy at large.

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Issue 6

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It Takes Two: Luke, Leia and the Mythology of Twins
by ami-padme

"[M]yths about twins…are rooted in [a] basic mystery of sameness and difference."[1]

Twins are the subject of much fascination and attention in mythic stories. Their unique connectedness, from the moment of conception through the rests of their lives, separates them from other kinds of close siblings and family members. However, considering twins as one linked unit is an incomplete approach, as their differences – in looks for non-identical twins, in personality, and in the life paths they follow – make for equally interesting study, whether those differences are complementary or in opposition.

In storytelling, twins serve a wide variety of dramatic functions. Pairs featuring one "good" twin and one "evil" twin have been a staple of ancient tales and modern-day soap operas alike. Stories where identical twins "switch places" or where one takes over the other's life, unbeknownst to those around them, have long intrigued audiences. And the idea that twins form two halves of a whole -- that one is incomplete without the other, that their lives and destinies will always be intertwined -- is perhaps more prevalent with opposite-sex pairs, but often applies to all types of twins. These and other narrative devices give twins a special place in myth, and the *Star Wars* myth is no exception.

Luke Skywalker and Leia Organa are twins born of the mystical union between the Chosen One, Anakin Skywalker and his warrior queen, Padmé Amidala.[2] Their birth allows the first half of the saga to end on a hopeful note despite the death and destruction that marks *Revenge of the Sith*; their arrival into adulthood is what sets the events of the saga's second half into motion. As they lead the way to restoring all that was lost during the prequel era, Luke and Leia serve a variety of functions: they are avatars of their parents, the next generation and last hope for the Jedi Order and the Galactic Republic, and representatives of a variety of archetypes the make up the mythical Hero's Journey. They are critical to the saga – inexorably linked to one another, and bound to the greater fate of the galaxy.

Many cultures offer tales of twins that echo through to the *Star Wars* films. Nut and Geb come from Ancient Egypt – Nut, a female, was the goddess of the sky, while Geb, a male, was the god of the earth. They are considered to be "complementary symbols -- meaning that the two complete each other, forming a whole." Depictions of the two often show Nut arched in the sky above an arched Geb as the Earth, creating a full circle.[3] In the West African nation of Mali, "twinship represents completeness and perfection." The god Nummo is a set of twins and the only creature to contain the "divine completeness" of being both male and female."[4] Mawu-Lisa, a god from the African country Benin, is a male-female pair of twins, where Mawu, the female, represents the moon, and Lisa, the male, represents the sun.[5]

Luke and Leia seem to invert the earth-sky connections of Nut and Geb. Luke, bearer of the Skywalker name, is obviously connected to the sky (and space) in the saga. Leia takes more of an earth-mother role, particularly when she is amongst the Ewoks on Endor during *Return of the Jedi*. Luke does match up with his male counterpart Lisa though – Lisa and Luke are both connected to the sun, Luke most prominently through his home planet of Tatooine, a desert planet in a binary sun system. Luke and Leia's relationship also has a slight romantic angle throughout the original trilogy – though much less so when compared to Nut and Geb, who were cast as lovers in addition to being twins.[6] While Leia is clearly

destined to be with Han, until all three main characters become aware of the twin-ship, Luke is occasionally cast as Han's rival for Leia's affections.

The Skywalker twins generally follow the thinking that twins are parts of a whole. First, they are male and female, representing both halves of humanity from a gender standpoint, much like the twin gods of ancient mythology mentioned earlier. This duality relates to the psychological and mythological concepts of the anima and animus. According to the *Myths-Dreams-Symbols* website, "The Anima is the personification of all feminine psychological tendencies within a man, the archetypal feminine symbolism within a man's unconscious. The Animus is the personification of all masculine psychological tendencies within a woman, the archetypal masculine symbolism within a woman's unconscious."[7] Psychologist Carl Jung call these personifications "soul images" and "accept[ing] and integrat[ing] your soul-image… will make up deficiencies of your persona and help you become a fuller and more balanced person."[8]

In the original trilogy, Leia serves as Luke's anima, while he is her animus. The *Myths* website states plainly that “a man's anima may be represented in his dreams by his sister; a woman's animus by her brother” and that “a recurring theme is that of the hero rescuing a beautiful young woman.”[9] In Episode IV, Luke’s call to action comes directly from Leia, whose message to Obi-Wan Kenobi sets him on the path to adventure. Once on the Death Star he sets saving her from death and imprisonment as his goal. Having accomplished that, it is later implied that at least part of Luke’s motivation in the final battle against Death Star is fighting for Leia and her cause. In *The Empire Strikes Back*, Luke defies his teachers and risks himself to save Leia (and Han) from Vader at Bespin, and it is Leia he calls to at his lowest point after defeat. In the final chapter, Luke’s desperate desire to protect his sister nearly drives him to the Dark Side. Rescuing a princess or damsel “means that the man has now lifted his femininity out of its dark imprisonment and welcomed it…as an indispensable factor in his life and happiness.”[10] While Han fits more of the animus characteristics for Leia than Luke does, Luke still represents certain animus-related masculine personality traits, such as courage, initiative, and wisdom.[11]

As part of twins being considered pieces of a whole, they have long been thought to possess a special extrasensory bond. Everything from a full-blown psychic connection (where one can literally read the other’s mind) to vaguely shared feelings and responses (such as when one feels pain when the other is hurt, or is anxious when the other is in a dangerous or difficult situation) has been attributed twins.[12] While science has never been able to prove the existence of such a bond, anecdotes abound, and people continue to believe it exists. While the existence of the Force in the *Star Wars* universe answers the general question of the reality of extrasensory perception in the films – and even unrelated people are able to sense each other depending on circumstance -- this form of ESP plays a role in establishing Luke and Leia as twins. As mentioned before, Luke calls to Leia at his most desperate moment following his loss to Darth Vader. Luke does so instinctively, as he has no reason at that point to think Leia would be able to hear him through the Force at all, or that she would be more likely to hear him than anyone else. Leia responds instinctively as well, not questioning how it is that she can hear Luke so clearly in her mind, or know with such certainty where he is. In Episode VI, when Han attempts to comfort Leia by saying that Luke was not on the Death Star when it was destroyed, she is calm and confident that her feeling that Luke is safe is correct. This psychic trait affected Luke and Leia before they knew they were brother and sister, and strengthened their closeness as the movies ended.

Taken together, the Skywalker twins also signify the rebirth of the galaxy through both the Jedi Order (through Luke, though Leia also has potential) and the Galactic Republic (through Leia), two institutions whose fates were tied together by the Sith Lord Palpatine, who used his strength in the Force and power with the government in order to destroy them both. Luke and Leia symbolize their parents' union, as they each possess different characteristics from their parents: they follow the same career paths and share some physical traits with the same-gender parent, Luke has Padmé's compassion, Leia has Anakin's impatience, they both share Anakin's anger and Padmé's sense of duty, and so on. Due to all of these factors, their fates are linked -- the period in between the *Star Wars* trilogies consists of little notable change for the galaxy or any of the characters from the prequels, and it is only when fate reunites Luke and Leia at the beginning of Episode IV that they are each put firmly on the path toward their particular destinies, and the movement toward revolutionary change begins for the rest of the galaxy.

As twins, Luke and Leia are in a unique position to capitalize on their central place in the Star Wars universe by drawing on the characteristics and talents common to this special kind of siblings. The mysteries of twinhood help propel the saga – especially its second half – toward its rewarding endings of redemption, peace, and reconciliation.

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Issue 7

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Kind Enough To Offer Us Shelter: Hospitality In The *Star Wars* Saga
by lazypadawan

A recurring scene throughout the *Star Wars* saga involves the characters taking a break from the adventure and drama by sitting around a table and sharing a meal. A common literary and dramatic device, it serves the purpose of gathering the characters for exposition. They can discuss what they've been doing, what motivates them, what matters to them, and what they would like to do, helping to move the story along. It also allows the reader or the audience an opportunity to get to know the characters on a personal level, fleshing themselves out to the reader or the audience by doing something all mere mortals do.

The first meal scene most of us ever saw in a *Star Wars* film was Uncle Owen, Aunt Beru, and Luke Skywalker gathered around the dinner table in *A New Hope*. The scene establishes Luke's restlessness and his uncle's resistance to Luke leaving the farm or discovering anything about his heritage. It emphasizes the home as a place of safety but from Luke's standpoint, a place of stagnation. The cave-like interior is a hiding place from the dangers of the outside galaxy, but it is also keeping Luke from his destiny.

However, there is another reason why these scenes exist. The importance of hospitality and sharing a meal dates back to ancient times. The Greeks stressed tremendous importance on hospitality, often sharing one's home and dinner table with storytellers and travelers. It's a way for people to bond together and to share knowledge. The concept of it is called "Xenia," and it sets forth rules of obligation between guest and host. The host provides the guest with food, drink, and a bath. Asking the guest any questions until the guest has had his or her fill is impolite.[1] Similarly, there is a long tradition of hospitality in the Middle East[2] and the New Testament also bids Christians to be hospitable to strangers and guests alike.[3]

The ancient idea of hospitality arises in *The Empire Strikes Back*. When Luke arrives on Dagobah, Yoda rejects the artificial nutrients from Luke's rations ("How do you get so big eating food of this kind?"). Yoda brings Luke into his small hovel for a fresh-cooked meal, some sort of "rootleaf stew," and shelter from the weather (poor Artoo is left out in the rain). Yoda is doing what is proper to help a stranded stranger in need, offering comfort, food, and a place to stay. He doesn't even ask Luke any questions until Luke is inside his home and eating. But of course there is more to Yoda's hospitality than the goodness of his heart. Bringing Luke into his home allows him to determine if Luke is truly ready to be trained, sharing with Luke his very first lessons in patience and what it means to be a Jedi.

Meanwhile, Lando Calrissian uses hospitality to trap Han, Leia, Chewie, and Threepio in Cloud City. He offers them shelter in gleaming quarters and invites them for a meal. But he doesn't tell them Darth Vader and Boba Fett are among the guests. In Greek and Middle Eastern tradition, what Lando does is a horrible violation of something sacred, and not just because he betrayed an old friend. It would have been just as dire, if not worse, had Lando done the same thing to a stranger. Had Lando been in the hands of an ancient poet or playwright, he would have suffered a terrible fate for his crime, one far worse than an angry Wookiee choking him or Darth Vader altering a deal. The Greeks considered hospitality a religious as well as a social obligation and violators could incur the wrath of Zeus.[4] In the Bible, God's wrath was incurred when the people of Sodom and Gamorrah violated the rules of hospitality with regard to two angels disguising themselves as human.[5]

Return of the Jedi doesn't have a traditional meal scene per se, but it is interesting to note the issue of hospitality does arise in this film. The characters experience the false hospitality of Jabba the Hutt's palace and the genuine hospitality bestowed upon them by the Ewoks. In the first act of *Return of the Jedi*, Jabba the Hutt lavishly shelters, entertains, and offers sustenance to a variety of underworld characters but his generosity can turn deadly on a dime. He makes a further mockery of the concept of hospitality when taking the main characters as prisoners. Jabba provides new clothes to Leia, but it's in the form of a slave dancer's outfit. He provides her drink but he forces her to imbibe from his chalice filled with who-knows-what. He forces Artoo and Threepio into his employ while he plans to execute Luke, Han, and Chewbacca for entertainment purposes.

The Ewoks provide a stark contrast later on in the film. They may live in humble tree huts instead of a large palace, but once the heroes are able to convince the Ewoks they mean well, the Ewoks accept them as one of their own. They shelter the heroes, provide Leia clothing, and by implication, give supplies to the Rebels leading the raid on the Imperial bunker. The Ewoks even assist the Rebels in their mission.

The Phantom Menace returns to the more traditional theme of hospitality. Anakin generously offers shelter from a sandstorm to offworld strangers, even though he lives in a small hovel with his mother. When he says Shmi "wouldn't mind," it's because this sort of generosity is a shared value among the Skywalker family. Qui-Gon is aware of the Skywalkers' poverty; he quietly gives Shmi something (food capsules, according to some "expanded universe" sources) and says, "These should help." But Shmi thinks nothing of feeding three extra guests and allowing them to stay in her small home. In fact, Qui-Gon respects this sacrifice so much, he chastises Jar Jar for displaying poor manners and snatching fruit off of the table. One of the rules of Xenia is that the guest must be courteous and not be a burden.[6]

A review of the book *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality As A Christian Tradition* by Christine D. Pohl notes that: "Hospitality is implicitly subversive in the way it shatters social boundaries, especially those boundaries enforced by table fellowship. When we eat with the lowly and welcome strangers and 'sinners' to our table, we topple social expectations and bear witness to the kind of love God has for all his creatures."[7] This reminds one of how this simple meal brought together slaves, a great Jedi Master, a lowly exiled Gungan, and a queen, breaking down the galaxy's social and class structures. This small group forms a bond that ultimately affects the fate of the galaxy.

Interestingly enough, *Attack of the Clones* has more meal scenes than any other *Star Wars* film, more than the other films combined. Almost all of these scenes are part of Anakin's courtship of Padmé. First there is the scene on the transport to Naboo, where they share their first meal alone. Even though they are in a crowded hold, they have a personal conversation about love and what it means. They have a picnic alone in the Lake Country and a romantic dinner at the retreat house. The concept though of hospitality remains. There is the deleted scene where Anakin and Padmé go to her parents' home on Naboo, where they share a meal with her family. Padmé's family welcome Anakin, a stranger, into their home despite their worries Padmé is in enough danger to need Jedi protection. Her mother and her sister also realize Anakin is a potential suitor. Later on in the film, there is a parallel with Luke's meal with Owen and Beru in A New Hope, where Anakin and Padmé gather with the Larses in the very same dining room. It's not a meal per se, but Beru offers them drinks. Finally, there is Padmé bringing Anakin something to eat after his mother's death, complete with that staple of comfort food in the Star Wars galaxy, blue milk. The meal scenes with Anakin and Padmé allow the two to get to know each

other better and grow closer. Anakin is able to integrate into Padmé's world and she becomes part of his, each of their families offering hospitality to the other.

Only one meal scene in *Attack of the Clones* doesn't involve Anakin and Padmé, and that is a brief shot of the clones eating in a Kamino mess hall. The setting is stark and austere. Judging by the expression of a clone's face as he's eating, the food isn't particularly tasty. It emphasizes the curious lack of human connection among these clones.

Revenge of the Sith does not have any types of these scenes. Perhaps it is because there is no sense of comfort or connection among the characters anymore. But it is interesting to note that we never see the Imperial or Sith characters offer anything in the way of food or drink to anyone. Even when Obi-Wan visits Kamino, presumably as a major client, the polite-seeming Kaminoans don't even offer him a glass of water.

A great deal has been made of the references to the mythical in the *Star Wars* saga, but few have considered hospitality as part of that tradition. It is clear, dramatic devices aside, that there is significance in even the simplicity of sharing a meal together.

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Issue 8

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"A Failure to Listen": Lucas's Fable of the Fall of Democracy
by Matril

Few would dispute the notion that the original Star Wars trilogy presents a very simple political argument. From the very beginning of Episode IV we are introduced to "the evil Empire," and there is little ambiguity throughout the films regarding the cruelty and tyranny of the Emperor's oppressive regime. Plainly put, totalitarian rule is bad. Other touches, such as the aptly named "stormtroopers" remind us of such real life regimes as Hitler's Nazi rule in Germany (which he himself named the Third *Reich*, or Empire), but the similarities are more of a subconscious than political level, creating associations with widely accepted icons of evil. Sophisticated political themes are not necessary in a tale of good versus evil, and for most of us the notion of opposing oppressive government is one we can gladly agree with.

But what of the prequel trilogy? With all its scenes involving the interworkings of a galaxy-wide republic, with the dialogue containing frequent mention of politics in some form or another, it would appear to embrace a much more in-depth exploration of political themes. Upon closer examination, however, the prequel films offer a message that is perhaps just as simple as that which is presented in the original films. If the original trilogy presents good people fighting against evil, the prequels are at their heart an examination of the fall of good things. On an individual level, we see Anakin turn to evil. On a galactic level, it is the fall of the Republic to a power-hungry Emperor. How does a Republic founded upon democracy and peace become a war-mongering, dictatorial Empire? It is summed up most aptly in a few words by Padmé Amidala, an idealist who is a symbol of what will be lost when the Republic dies. She declares, "this…represents a failure to listen." A failure to listen: it is nothing more intricate or complicated than that. That is not to say that the message lacks depth or intelligence. On the contrary, it is a message which concerns not just a single instance of political thought, pertinent only to a particular era, place or situation. It may have been influenced by the political circumstances of the time, but instead of addressing those issues specifically and therefore rendering the films dated, their message inevitably becoming obsolete, Lucas offers a more general notion that has power to outlast one particular political climate. It is a universal theme, applicable to anyone who values justice, equality, and an interest in the common good.

The primary blame for the Republic's fall can be placed on Palpatine's shoulders, but each of his machinations to achieve the throne of Emperor are accomplished by exploiting people's tendencies to stop listening to each other. If enough people had recognized the danger of this tendency, the demise of democracy could have been prevented in spite of every one of Palpatine's insidious plots. The necessity of listening to each other is inherent to the definition of democracy: "a form of government for the people by the will of the majority of the people (based on conception of the equality of man)" (Webster 102). This definition of democracy is apparent in the prequels from Sio Bibble's defiant words to Nute Gunray in Episode I: "We're a democracy: the people have decided." Their government is of the people, not any single person. The earliest recorded forms of what we call democracy originated in ancient Greece, where philosophers arrived at the following conclusions:

> A State, I said, arises, as I conceive, out of the needs of mankind…as we have many wants, and many persons are needed to supply them, one takes a helper for one purpose and another for another…one gives, and another receives, under the idea that the exchange will be for their good. (Plato 241)

Their basic aim was the common good of all the people, achieved by mutual exchange. This can be taken literally in terms of physical goods, but it can also be taken to mean the exchange of words; communication. After all, how can the needs or the overall will of the majority of the people be known unless the government is capable of listening to the people's voice regarding that will?

When considering how this is accomplished in a galaxy-sized population, it would do well to acknowledge that a technical democracy is virtually impossible for the governing of a large group of people. Most would argue that even the real-life government of the United States, famous as the first modern democracy, cannot be officially defined as such; it is simply too large for the literal will of every person to be made known. Indeed, scholars have pointed out that the founding fathers of America were extremely wary of "the sort of direct democracy in which an emotionally aroused populace could be swayed to follow leaders like the violent Daniel Shays [the man who instigated a bloody rebellion during the time between the Revolutionary War and the Constitutional Convention]" (Brinkley 109). The modern, popular conception of democracy is usually associated more with the latter half of Webster's definition – "based on the conception of the equality of man" – than the specific workings of the government. It might more accurately be termed a republic based upon democratic principles, a republic being defined as "a state, without a hereditary head, in which supremacy of the people or its elected representatives is formally acknowledged" (Webster 314). Therefore it is quite appropriate for the prequel's grand government to be known simply as the Republic. The role of listening is just as essential in a republic as in a literal democracy, whether it be listening to the people themselves or to their representatives, such as the Senators in the Galactic Senate. The same founding fathers who shied away from literal democracy were quite willing to create a flexible system of government with specific details "left to be worked out later...[and] a fail-safe system of checks and balances to prevent abuses and concentrations of power wherever they might occur" (ibid). They trusted in the power of peaceable communication to solve their problems, they were aware of the dangers of rigidly ignoring any need for change, and they knew as well as anyone that when those who serve in the government no longer listen to those who need to be heard, a democratic republic cannot stand.

Anakin and Padmé have an intriguing conversation regarding this problem in Episode II, revealing their differing political views. At first Anakin presents a notion of government that appears quite democratic: "We need a system where the politicians sit down and discuss the problem, and agree what's in the best interest of all the people, and then do it!" When Padmé argues that that is exactly what the Republic aims to do, but "people don't always agree," Anakin retorts that "they should be made to." The tone turns darker as Padmé demands, "By whom? You?" and Anakin vaguely answers, "Someone wise." As we already know that he has formed a friendship with Palpatine, there can be little doubt that he is thinking of the Chancellor. But Padmé's response is that it "sounds an awful lot like a dictatorship to me." Indeed, that is the most ominous aspect of Anakin's political notion. They both agree that people are failing to listen to each other and that this problem needs to be resolved, but Anakin would go to such extreme ends as to do away with democracy entirely, to allow the will of one "wise" person to supersede the general will of the people.

Unfortunately, because those in the government are unwilling or unable to regain their ability to listen on their own, it is ultimately Palpatine who forces his will upon them. Their weakness opens the way for him to gain ultimate power. We are introduced to this weakness first in Episode I, when Palpatine's Sith alter-ego, Darth Sidious, assures the Trade Federation leaders who are terrorizing Naboo: "I have the Senate bogged down in

procedures," and later, "I will see to it that in the Senate, things stay as they are." This state of static inaction is aptly portrayed later on in the Senate scene on Coruscant, when Queen Amidala's pleas for help are hardly acknowledged, drowned out by snidely indignant denials from the Federation representative, and droning references to bureaucratic procedure. In short, no one listens to Amidala. Palpatine's hand in this, foreshadowed by Sidious's words, is clear from his all-knowing, almost smug expression each time Amidala is interrupted and disparaged: clearly, he has influenced these Senators and bureaucrats into disregarding the suffering of the Naboo. Certainly the decision to assist the queens' people should not be arrived at lightly, not when it would demand significant resources of the Republic, but Amidala is not even permitted to finish stating her plea for help. How differently would she have felt about the Senate if they had responded with compassion, if they had simply listened to her? Instead, she is so disillusioned by their dismissive response that she makes the motion to oust the current Chancellor from the Senate's head, little knowing that the man who will take his place only plans to deepen the bureaucratic mire into which the Republic is sinking.

The dire political circumstances engulfing the Republic have become far more widespread by Episode II. Instead of a single planetary conflict, hundreds of systems have become embroiled in violence and discontent. Referred to simply as "the Separatists," the leaders of these systems are threatening to break away from the Republic; why exactly, we are never told. Interestingly, and ominously, there is little mention of the possibility that this dissension could be resolved diplomatically; in other words, by listening to and addressing the Separatists' grievances. Already established in the opening crawl is the clamor to create "An army of the Republic." It is by force, and not by listening, that the majority of Senators hope to resolve the Separatist issue. When the Jedi are discussing this with Chancellor Palpatine, Mace Windu makes passing reference to the Jedi being "keepers of the peace, not soldiers," but with that statement he implicitly agrees that an army is the only solution. Palpatine's vague references to "negotiations" are not elaborated upon, nor can we expect that he is doing much to ensure their success. Unsurprisingly, it is Padmé Amidala and just a few others who oppose the creation of the army, still seeking a peaceful alternative. In a deleted scene taking place after the attempted assassination which killed her handmaiden Cordé, Padmé argues with great fervor that "if you offer the Separatists violence, they can only show violence in return." Once again her voice of reason is largely drowned out. Her own fellow from Naboo, Jar Jar Binks, is caught up in their rhetoric and convinced that Padmé would want him to pave the way for a grand army, believing that she would have had "the courage to propose such a radical amendment." On the contrary, there is great cowardice in the Senate handing over so much of their power to the Chancellor - cowardice, and selfishness, that Palpatine gladly exploits.

However, this failure to listen cannot be attributed to the Senate alone. The Separatists also seem little inclined to respond to diplomacy, which is hardly surprising once we learn that they are being goaded on by the Sith lord Sidious and his politically wily apprentice, Tyranus or Count Dooku. The seeds of violence were in the Separatist movement from the beginning; they are not interested in listening to anyone. It is also no surprise to see that representatives from the Trade Federation, and others motivated by selfishness and greed, form the bulk of the Separatist leadership. They prevented Amidala's pleas from being heard while Naboo was besieged; now they continue their Sith-inspired work of preventing peaceable communication. By the time Padmé and her companions have been summarily sentenced to execution after a mockery of a trial, attacked by a veritable army of droids, and finally drawn into an all-out battle on Geonosis, even she acknowledges that the time for a "diplomatic solution" has passed, replaced by "aggressive negotiations." That glib exchange between her and Anakin represents an ominous future for the

Republic, when its greatest advocate for peace succumbs to the apparent necessity of violence.

By Episode III, the disintegrating Republic has been fully engaged in galactic war for some years. We are confronted with scenes of massive battles, both in space and on the surface of planets in every corner of the galaxy. Leaders, including Jedi warriors, plan strategies and issue military commands; diplomacy is the farthest thing from their minds. Mace's claim that the Jedi are keepers of the peace seems less and less accurate as they are seen leading soldiers forth into battle. The opportunity for listening to and communicating with the other side in this conflict has long passed. Meanwhile, in the Senate, there is only one person to whom most of its members pay any attention: the Supreme Chancellor. Palpatine himself is, of course, cruelly deaf to the needs of anyone who will not further his own quest for power.

The few who are wary of Palpatine's increasing powers, including Padmé Amidala and Bail Organa, are summarily ignored. Padmé intimates her concerns to her own husband, fearing already that "the democracy we thought we were serving no longer exists." She cites the problem of a failure to listen and pleads with him to speak to the Chancellor personally so that he can "stop the fighting and let diplomacy resume." Anakin's response shows, on a small scale, the state of metaphorical deafness in which Palpatine has placed the Republic. Refusing to acknowledge that there may be truth to her words, he instead takes her words as a personal attack, drowning out her reasoning with an emotional outburst. What Padmé does not realize is that he is still stinging from the Council's unsettling intention of setting him up to spy on Palpatine. "Don't ask me to do that," he snaps. "Make a motion in the Senate where that kind of a request belongs." Unfortunately, the Senate is just as ensnared in the Chancellor's falsehoods as Anakin, and just as incapable of listening to Padmé's desperate call for diplomacy. Indeed, the only Senate session which occurs during Episode III is the one which marks the final death throes of the ailing Republic. "So this is how liberty dies," Padmé says numbly as Palpatine declares himself Emperor. "With thunderous applause." An apt choice of words to illustrate the problem she has identified earlier, for it is this applause, both literal and figurative, that has drowned out the voices which should have been listened to. Democracy has been silenced.

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Star Wars: A Cinematic Phenomenon?
by Rebecca Thomas

*A toll-free number giv[ing] out information about the release of…*Empire Strikes Back *was short-circuited in one day when one hundred thirty thousand calls were registered. Fans send in more than two hundred thousand letters a year to [George] Lucas and his leading actors. There are a mother and son who have seen Star Wars…at least four hundred times. Terri Hardin…gained extensive press coverage when she waited two days in line for the premier of Empire...Upon the release of* Return of the Jedi*, Lucasfilm made sure that a novelisation, a record album, a film documentary, a book on the making of the film and an entire new line of merchandising products would come out simultaneously.*

George Lucas' *Star Wars* films are some of the most popular of all time; in fact, the term "may the Force be with you" is now recognisable in most countries around the world. But why did *Star Wars* become such a cinematic phenomenon? By exploring the state of America upon the release of *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* in 1977, the recognisable symbolism of this film, and the aesthetics of production, including technological advances in filmmaking, we can access why the first *Star Wars* film was such a success.

George Lucas the writer, producer and director of the *Star Wars* films was just like any other American kid of the '60s; he lived life on the edge and didn't care much for school or the future. Then on Tuesday 12th June 1962 George crashed his Fiat Bianchina near the Lucas ranch in Modesto, the incident was serious and George believed the fact that he was still alive was a miracle. George saw his own mortality, which provided him with the drive to succeed and do something with his life. This change provided perspective, driving George to read avidly in philosophy, history and sociology and also to commit further to succeed with his education by studying film at the University of Southern California .

In 1973 Lucas started work on *Star Wars*, the project he had dreamt of for years. *Episode IV: A New Hope* took approximately two and a half years to write. The final script was 160 pages, a screenplay for a two-hour movie normally being just 118 pages; however Lucas was a perfectionist and his script was planned right down to the second, even footage taken from World War Two news reels of aerial battles for the dogfights was timed carefully.

It was Alan Ladd at FOX who agreed to take on *Star Wars*, although at the time he admitted he didn't really understand the whole concept; however had seen Lucas' other work, including *THX1138* (1971) and *American Graffiti* (1973), and could see his potential. After several delays, FOX released *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* in May 1977.

Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope was released during a period of change in American cinema. From the late 1940s the cinema going audience started to decline due to growing prosperity, the rise of the automobile, suburbanisation and perhaps most of all due to the introduction of television. Equally the prosperous studio system of the early part of the twentieth century was breaking down after the 1948 antitrust suit against Paramount. It was the rise of the film school generation in the late 1960s and early 1970s that bought about a new mood to Hollywood.

There was now a whole generation who had grown up with a love of film and this was reflected in education with an increased number of colleges and universities adding film to the curriculum, both at undergraduate and graduate level. Film school graduates, the likes

of Francis Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese and George Lucas, began to demonstrate that youthful spirit could be more profitable than experience. Films like *Easy Rider* (1969) achieved phenomenal success and youth-cult status on a low budget, exactly what the Hollywood executives were looking for. The new film school generation also lead to a rise in film-smart movie goers. A new wave of youngsters emerged who had more leisure time and disposable income, together with a love of film to spend it all on and as a result the industry turned to genre pictures, which had previously been the sole domain of the exploitation market, for example gangster films, teen hot-rod flicks and science fiction adventure.

The science fiction genre in particular made an intriguing mutation with the omnipresent threat of nuclear annihilation. It took the form of myths and fairy tales to provide an escape to another time or place, linking the genre with adventure rather than horror as it had been previously. As T S Eliot perceived "humankind cannot bear very much reality" and this escapism provided the avoidance society required.

It was not just the fear of nuclear destruction that saw a shift in American's attitudes during the 1960s and 1970s. There was a departure from social activism and although Conservatism stayed steadfast, the atmosphere of Americans was evolving from one of liberal reforms. People still cherished the goals of the reform movement and whilst they had seen many successes, with fundamental change in black segregation and barriers being lifted within the political system, they had also witnessed many failures as well. The failures were highlighted by their nature and appeared to outweigh the successes. Americans were dissatisfied and wanted a release from the agitations of Vietnam, civil rights and Watergate.

The hostility encountered by the reform movement, the corruption of the Nixon, and the failure of American policy in Vietnam left the country with a sense of disillusionment. The inability of the United States to defeat North Vietnam had badly bruised the ego of the nation. The animosity directed towards the civil rights and antiwar movement created a feeling of cynicism, as many people began to doubt the country's commitment to justice and equality. Worst of all was the sense of betrayal engendered by the Watergate scandal. Richard Nixon had asked the American people to trust him, and many came to regret that they had. The great crusade to reform the nation and the world had, it seemed, failed.

Hollywood had been churning out a succession of gritty down beat grim reality films during the early 1970s; key examples being *Earthquake* (1974), *Towering Inferno* (1974) and *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972), which portrayed an un-imaginable magnitude of desperate situations. Equally anti-hero films such as *The French Connection* (1971) showed the audience that even the good guy was bad and could not be trusted. However by the mid to late 1970s, films that were the most profitable "reassured rather than disturbed the public." Rather than showing Americans the negative that they knew from life at this time, films started to portray a more positive note and take the audience to a time when things were better. Even Lucas' *American Graffiti* (1973), set just eleven years prior to release, returned to an era before the anguish of Vietnam, before the assassination of Kennedy and King, and the disappointment of Watergate. *Star Wars* was set in a universe far away and long ago and "evoked the bygone pleasures of children's Saturday matinees at the movies," where the problems of society no longer existed and the audience could return to an age of innocence.

The opening credits of *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* start with the words "A long, long time ago in a galaxy far, far away" as if to truly evoke the feelings of "once upon a

time," like a modern fairy tale. Lucas had "long been intrigued with the idea of creating a modern day fairy tale" and the response from the teenage audience towards his previous film *American Graffiti* (1973) satisfied George that there was more need than ever in America for this type of story. "There is a whole generation growing up without any kind of fairy tales...And kids need fairy tales."

George Lucas has been hopeful since childhood that someone would release a "romantic-fantasy-adventure story set in a distant time." However what Hollywood produced was nothing more than cumbersome, immature science fiction films with an easily anticipated plot line. Accurately noticing an opening, Lucas "borrowed liberally from the Flash Gordon serials he had watched as a child," analysed an abundance of classic films and read contemporary science fiction novels to give his film story line appeal to audiences who were weary of the cinematic sex and violence apparent during the late 1960s and early 1970s, and wanted to return to classic Hollywood style action adventures.

The structure of the *Star Wars* story follows the classic Hollywood narrative form of the early part of the twentieth century. It has a clear beginning when the characters are introduced: Darth Vader and Princess Leia on board her consular ship, the *Tantive IV*; the two droids R2-D2 and C-3PO as they escape the *Tantive IV* and land on the remote desert planet of Tatooine; then Luke Skywalker and finally Obi-Wan Kenobi on Tatooine. Things are peaceful and there is order. Then the middle section of the film establishes the conflict. There is disorder and the characters head off on a journey to try and restore order: Storm troopers searching for the droids kill Luke's aunt and uncle, forcing Luke to leave Tatooine with the droids and Obi-Wan on a journey to take the droids to the planet of Alderaan to help the Rebel Alliance fight the Empire. Finally, the conflict is resolved and order is restored when the Death Star is destroyed and the fight against the Empire is won; peace falls on the galaxy once more. The classic Hollywood narrative form similarly recalls the nostalgia of traditional filmmaking as recognisable symbolism for the audience.

The use of recognisable symbolism to create a familiar story line in *Star Wars* included a story pattern which can be found throughout classical mythology. George had developed an intense interest in the great themes of the epic struggles between good and evil he had discovered in literature; "I was trying to get fairy tales, myths and religion down to a distilled state, studying the pure form to see how and why it worked," Lucas said. In particular George was enthralled by the writings of Joseph Campbell. The basis of Campbell's work into comparative religion and mythology is a main undercurrent in the *Star Wars* story. In his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949) Joseph Campbell describes the "monomyth," which is often referred to as the "Hero's Journey":

> A Hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.

Campbell himself cites other examples of classic mythology to explain the "monomyth." For example, "Jason...who [leaves] the cave in which he was brought up in order to search for the Golden Fleece and then returned with this prize to recapture his homeland[,] and Prometheus, who travelled to Mount Olympus, stole fire from the gods, and brought it back to earth."

Just like the classic Hollywood narrative the story line in *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* adheres well to Campbell's description of the three stages of a "monomyth." First there is the departure, or separation. Luke a bored and restless teenager is living on the

remote planet of Tatooine; however "the time for the passing of a threshold is at hand" and the arrival of the two robots, R2-D2 and C-3PO, with a secret message heralds the "call to adventure." The first step of the hero's journey cannot proceed without the help of a supernatural aid; "it may be some little fellow of the wood, some wizard, hermit, shepherd, or smith, who appears, to supply the amulets and advice that the hero will require. ' In the case of *Star Wars*, Ben Kenobi, once the rebel General and Jedi Knight Obi-Wan Kenobi and now a mysterious hermit, arrives in the story and gives Luke his fathers old Light Sabre. "Aided by the advice, amulets, and secret agents of the supernatural helper" the hero is now ready for his Initiation; the second stage of his journey. In this second stage one of the tests or ordeals that the hero has to endure is described by Campbell: "The hero dreams that a snake wound itself around his body, the crept up to his neck." "The [hero] is absolutely abandoned and alone in a deep hole of a cellar. The walls of his room keep getting narrower and narrower, so that he cannot stir. ' In *Star Wars*, Luke is plunged into the garbage crusher and nearly drowned by the snake like Dianoga , just before the waste processing starts and the walls of the garbage crusher start to close in. The third and final stage of the Hero's journey, according to Campbell is the Return: "The full round, the norm of the monomyth, requires that the hero shall now begin the labour of bringing the runes of wisdom...or his sleeping princess, back into the kingdom of humanity, where the boon may redound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, or the ten thousand worlds." Indeed Luke has rescued Princess Leia and returns her and the plans for the Death Star to the rebel forces, so they may defeat the Empire concluding the final part of the monomyth or Hero's journey.

Besides the fantasy aspect of fairy tales and the monomyth, Lucas wanted to provide a clear cut distinction between good and evil, unlike the anti-heroes that had obscured American cinema since World War Two. George sort more traditional values to please disillusioned Americans. "He needed a timeless fable that could demonstrate, not pontificate on, the differences between right and wrong, good and evil, responsibility and shiftlessness." It was fundamental, therefore, for characters to be well defined in their roles, hence "the storm troopers of the (evil) Empire are dressed in Nazi-style uniforms, while Han Solo...wears the vest, holster, and boots of a cowboy hero," providing easily recognisable images of heroes and villains for the audience to relate to.

While Lucas wanted to demonstrate positive values thought the characters in *Star Wars*, he also realised the protective culture of the 1950s had gone. Traditional religion was becoming obsolete and moral values appeared to be disintegrating. Lucas explained: "Nobody's saying the very basic things; they're dealing in the abstract. Everybody's forgetting to tell the kids, 'Hey, this is right and this wrong.'" George needed something simple and universal to get his message across. By comparing religions and tracing them back to the teachings of the great prophets, Lucas and his colleague Gary Kurtz saw a lot of similarities in the "ethics of responsibility and self sacrifice"; "The core philosophies are very very similar." This gave them the idea for The Force; a universal deity for people to believe in, not a singular religion or a single god, but a saviour for everybody to demonstrate positive values.

George was desperate to get the message of positive values across to the younger generation; however he claimed that *Star Wars* was not just a children's movie. The story line in *Star Wars* actually has something for all members of the audience. The action and futuristic technology appeals to male members of the audience, while the love rivalry between Luke and Han is also a classic screen jealousy and adds a subtle romantic twist providing interest for female spectators. However the average of movie goers had reduced. In 1970-1971 over forty-three percent of the audience were aged between twelve

and twenty; by the end of the 1970s this figure had risen to fifty percent. Likewise the twenty-one to twenty-nine age bracket represented thirty percent of the audience at this time. Accordingly seventy-five percent of cinema goers were under the age of thirty. Therefore the fact that the character and mythological fairy tale story line attracted children was extremely beneficial.

It is the special effects in *Star Wars* that make this mythological fairy tale into a reality. Lucas and his crew were going to have to develop a whole new world whilst ensuring that the setting was different from any that movie audiences had ever seen before to give the film an accessible edge. However many of the effects George envisaged had never been attempted before. Previously many directors had avoided using special effects because the technology was just too wearisome and expensive; in effect the industry was dying: "Warners once employed a hundred special-effects technicians...Now there were none. Background painters and matte artists…now worked freelance on films...everyone assumed the art would die with them." As there were no specialist companies in the industry, Lucas created Industrial Light and Magic (ILM) in July 1975 as a subsidiary of Lucasfilm Ltd to actualise his own effects. In all $2.5 million of the budget for *Star Wars* was spent in special effects alone, which, at the time, was unprecedented.

In order to assist with the revolution in the effects industry that *Star Wars* required to bring the magic to the screen, in June 1975 Lucas turned to John Dykstra, an "up and coming light in the world of effects." It had taken eight week for Industrial Light and Magic to construct the sets ready for the special effects of the space battles before filming could even start and even then the results looked disastrous, Lucas recalled, "It was terrible. I knew it wasn't going to work. The ships looked like little cardboard cut-outs, and the lasers were big and fat and looked awful. We couldn't use any of it." Dykstra had been experimenting with new camera techniques using blue screen technology, "a special process that makes the background disappear under special lighting." Previously models were hung on wires and the camera had been moved towards them, but this did not allow for precision as movements could not be duplicated exactly, which was essential when using a starry background. Other special effect technicians, like Wally Veevers on *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), had tried to produce the precision required, but the method was very time consuming with some shots taking hours to film. By keeping the model stationary and moving the camera around it, Dykstra had found an easier method of filming, and by replacing the worm gear previously used with electronics, allowed for the exact increments required to obtain the precision required. Additionally electronic motors could be placed inside the model's turrets, for example, to allow for more intricate and realistic movement and effects. The system became known as the Dykstraflex and revolutionised the effects industry.

The motion-control system developed for *Star Wars* was...named the "Dykstraflex." The freedom the system offered to repeat precise camera/model movements allowed for fast-moving foreground action to be played out against perfectly synchronised backgrounds. "This allows complex, matched-move, multi-element matte shots by shooting the foreground against a blue screen and then taking that program of motions to a twin camera system. A separate background element can then be photographed with matching motions," explained Dykstra... "When the two elements are combined, the appearance is that of real-time photography -- allowing pans, tilts, rolls, and accelerations, on shots having a multitude of elements that were shot at different times, on separate cameras."

Further radical methods in *Star Wars* were seen in the production and editing. To give the actors the space to evolve into a scene, George developed a "seamless shooting style."

Instead of filming twenty or thirty “takes” of a scene, which was usual in the industry, Lucas just took four or five, but these were longer than normal, thus allowing the actors room to develop their characters and give them the depth of reality. To move from scene to scene Lucas used wipes and irises , not only did these serve to promote the narrative, but also they evoke nostalgia for the old movies in which such devices were common. Equally, George used roll-up titles at the start of *Star Wars*, which were indicative of the 1930s and 1940s serials and conjured up the magic of that era. Therefore Lucas used simple methods to give the film depth, reality and nostalgia.

The music of *Star Wars* gives the film depth, and provides an emotional anchor. Traditionally science fiction films had used futuristic electronic style sound tracks and with the advent of Disco during the 1970s, Lucas looked to be taking a huge risk in calling for an old fashioned symphonic score with "Korngoldian sentiment and Holstian bombast"; however John Williams seemed to pull out all the stops to exceed Lucas’ expectations. The eighty-seven piece London Symphony Orchestra created "a rich pastiche of Richard Strauss, chromed in brass, with a swashbuckling march theme right out of Strauss’s Don Juan" and the militaristic four-over-four beat of the sound track provided a recognisable feel, reminiscent of the victory of World War Two, thus providing a familiar tone to the unfamiliar surroundings of the film.

Everything visual was going to be unfamiliar. What should be familiar was the emotional connection that the film has through the ear to the visceral.

Lucas was keen that *Star Wars* have a plethora of recognisable trappings. The soundtrack, the first to use of Dolby stereo sound , used new but also natural and everyday sounds. For the sound of the laser blasters a wrench hitting a tightened mast guy support wire was used. Equally, the costumes were to be functional and not flashy to provide an organic, familiar atmosphere. There were large parts of the back-story that could not be told in the film, for example "the nature and structure of the Empire, Luke’s background, the Jedi -- none were explained." Lucas decided on an exception solution; he wouldn’t explain anything. By concentrating on the story line and taking for granted the outlandish places and weird creatures, Lucas depicted a common way of living and thus it became as familiar as real life to the audience.

The outlandish places the story goes are taken for granted. The film depicts a common way of living, and everybody does it. It makes it more believable, quite frankly...There were laser swords, but it was more like, “Here, kid, take your father’s old laser sword”. And it’s in a leather case...The aliens walked around. They were just there.

Star Wars changed the way we look at movies and how movies are made. The film’s ground breaking special effects gave the unfamiliar a sense of reality, which when combined with the emotion provoking music and clever way of presenting the strange story as an everyday narrative enables the spectator to be engulfed in the experience, not wanting it to end. However, as Lucas explained, "If it [*Star Wars*] were just an adrenaline-rush movie, it wouldn’t be here 20 years later. There are other things going on that are complicated and psychologically satisfying." This could be found in the plethora of recognisable symbolism found throughout the film. The tales of heroes taken from classic mythology and the simple fight between good and evil in the modern fairy tale theme are not obvious, but give the narrative a familiar tone; something easily understandable. Equally the fact that the Force provides a universal deity, drawing on different religions and not promoting a singular religion or god, makes the story accessible to all no matter what their background. The universal accessibility extends to a story line that is suitable for all:

young or old; rich or poor; male or female. The "audience share a subconscious emotional reaction to a movie -- when it's as popular as *Star Wars*, the shared emotion becomes a cultural force." Overall *Star Wars* combines the unfamiliar with the familiar in an accessible yet exciting new manor.

The film also appears to have been released at the right time. 1977 saw a whole generation who had grown up with a love of film, many of which had gone on to study film at college or university. This generation appreciated the new special effects and deeper symbolism apparent in *Star Wars*. The full title of the movie; *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* also had a tone of irony to the time. America was feeling a sense of disillusionment over agitations of Vietnam, civil rights and Watergate and needed a new hope to move forward.

The fact that *Star Wars* is a cinematic phenomenon comes from the combination of its nostalgic feel, sense of familiarity, dynamic effects or promotion of hope, and as Sir Alec Guiness suggests "Failure has a thousand explanations. Success doesn't need one."

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The Orphan Strikes Back: The Significance Of Luke Skywalker's Orphan Origin
by Reihla

"We find them everywhere in fantasy fiction: the 'orphaned heroes,' young men and women whose parents are dead, absent, or unknown, who turn out to be the heirs to the kingdom, the destined pullers of swords from stones, the keys to the riddles, the prophesies' answers, the bearers of powerful magic."[1]

In folk tales, literature and film there can be no mistaking that the orphan who becomes a hero is a very prominent figure. Books are filled with children who have lost one or both parents. Some have been totally abandoned and left to their own devices. Others are being fostered by aunts, uncles, step-parents or other authority figures that can be either cruel or loving. Moses, Romulus and Remus, Cinderella, Oliver Twist, Mowgli, Peter Parker, Harry Potter, Tarzan, Superman, Annie, King Arthur, Frodo Baggins, and yes, Luke Skywalker. And that list doesn't even scratch the surface.

Throughout the *Star Wars* saga George Lucas seems inordinately fond of orphans (Luke, Leia, Boba Fett) and outcasts (Han, Shmi, Jar-Jar). All of the Jedi, in a sense, are orphans, having been removed from their family environment at a very young age and raised in a temple by foster caregivers.

In general, Jedi children don't engender our sympathy, perhaps because they knew no other life. Or perhaps we perceive them to be answering a "higher calling" to become one of the galaxy's champions of justice. When we see them in the films, there is no sense that they are lost, forlorn or lonely. The exception to this is Anakin Skywalker. He comes closer to falling into the orphan category than most Jedi children because we know that he had a loving parent he was forced to lose for the greater good found in the chance to become a Jedi. Yes, Anakin gets to become a "galactic superhero," but we know he paid a high price -- losing contact with the one person in his life that he loved – to do so.

We've also come to realize that Leia Organa was an orphan, but this realization came late in the saga and so little is known of her life with her foster parents that I'm not considering her in this paper. The only point of interest I found about Leia as an orphan while researching this topic was in a paper by Kelly Woods, a student at the University of British Columbia's School of Library, Archival and Information Studies. Her research on female orphans in Canadian literature led her to conclude that "Female orphan characters often contrast with traditional views of women; they are strong-willed, they are independent, they are self-possessed."[2] If this is, indeed, typical of the female orphan in literature, Princess Leia certainly falls into that category.

Without a doubt, the most obvious orphan of the *Star Wars* saga is Luke Skywalker. The question, then, as far as *Star Wars* fans are concerned, is why did Lucas choose to make the central hero of his saga an orphan hero?

The most obvious of reasons is to gain our sympathy. Author Melanie Kimball describes the orphan as "the quintessential outcast who operates in isolation."[3] There is always an element of loneliness, of isolation to an orphan, an underdog status he has to work to shed. Because of the circumstances of his life, the reader wants to cheer for him, wants to see him succeed. "Orphan characters in folktales and literature symbolize our isolation

from one another and from society…They embody the hope that whatever the present situation, it can change for the better."[4]

We are attracted to orphan as an archetype because they seem to be common people with almost insurmountable obstacles to overcome. Readers find a special sense of camaraderie with such a character that they might not feel with other larger-than-life archetypes. The orphan's circumstance is often so much more hopeless or dire than our own that we empathize with their journey to overcome. "Orphans symbolize the feeling of abandonment that all humans experience at times. But orphans in literature also give us hope…. If a pitiable orphan can succeed against enormous odds, then so can we."[5]

Ms. Kimball also believes that the central plot surrounding orphan stories frequently follows Joseph Campbell's much-discussed hero's journey. She goes on to point out several of these similarities by listing story elements that orphan heroes often have in common with Campbellian heroes. "It has been said there are no new stories, just retelling of old ones. A comparison of orphan tales from around the world has shown that, while the details of the stories are not the same, there are some common elements that can be extracted."[6] Let's consider these elements with regard to the character of Luke Skywalker.

I. The orphan is somehow mistreated.

Luke isn't obviously mistreated, as some orphans are. He doesn't have Cinderella's wicked stepmother making him into a household servant or Oliver Twist's cruel workhouse overseer. He definitely has better foster parents than Harry Potter's Dursleys. The mistreatment in Luke's circumstance takes a gentler view. His foster parents, Owen and Beru, seem to love him, but theirs is a harsh life filled with sacrifices. We get the sense that Luke has worked hard on the farm for many years, often at the expense of normal childhood activities and definitely at the expense of his future plans. Luke is also denied information about his true parentage – Owen told him his father was a navigator on a spice freighter – though the motivation for such an untruth probably served the dual purpose of keeping him bound to life on Tatooine as well as keeping him safe. Either way he is trapped in a hopeless existence that makes him miserable.

II. The orphan is given a quest or journey.

We can almost sense Luke's quest when Obi-Wan Kenobi hands him his father's lightsaber. Anticipation is heightened when Obi-Wan explains his true heritage – that his father was a Jedi knight. It is not surprising that, a few moments later, Leia's holographic image appears and begs Obi-Wan for assistance. At that point we know that somehow Luke will go with Obi-Wan to Alderaan, despite his claims that he should return to the ritual of life on the moisture farm. In short order we see the brutal murder of Luke's foster parents, which cements his orphan status even more firmly and propels him along his quest road away from dull life on Tatooine. He is off to find his fortune, rescue a princess and realize his dreams.

III. The orphan faces obstacles on his/her journey.

Luke faces so many obstacles on his journey that they are difficult to list. His foster parents are the first obstacle, both with their lie about his parentage and their insistence that he not leave Tatooine. Even without their negative reinforcement, though, Luke's location is so remote that it seems he stands little chance of seeing anyplace in the universe farther from home than Mos Eisley spaceport. When those initial obstacles are eliminated, Luke faces

even greater obstacles: joining the rebellion, defeating the Empire, facing Darth Vader, and finally, conquering the darkness within himself.

Interestingly enough, Dennis Leoutsakis writes in his contemplation of orphan stories that "The duality of fictional orphans often represents the struggle between good and evil"[7] Certainly this is true in the case of Luke Skywalker. His most difficult struggle – the hardest obstacle he had to overcome – was the temptation to succumb to rage and hatred. It was through Luke's internal struggle and his subsequent overcoming of the dark side in himself, that Lucas showed us that the battle between good and evil must often be waged within ourselves. In Luke we see the orphan victorious. In Anakin, we see the other side of the coin – what happens when the dark side wins.

IV. The orphan often has outside assistance in overcoming obstacles.

Space pilot Han Solo and Obi-Wan both help Luke overcome the first of his obstacles, namely the remote location of Tatooine. Obi-Wan is determined to take Luke with him, but it is Han's space ship that provides the vehicle by which both Luke and Obi-Wan are liberated from their remote location: the planet furthest from "the bright center of the universe."

It is at this point that Obi-Wan steps in and removes Luke's figurative blinders by introducing him to the mystical power within himself – the ability to use The Force. By using a droid remote and a helmet with a blast shield, he gives Luke the most rudimentary lesson in seeing without his eyes. He awakens Luke's special power, putting him firmly on the road to his dream of becoming a Jedi. Obi-Wan gives Luke his "first step into a larger world."

Leia Organa does her part to assist Luke as well. Through her contacts he is able to realize his dream of joining the Rebel Alliance and ultimately even becoming a fighter pilot. Yoda, too, is an essential obstacle remover by teaching Luke that he must avoid "anger, fear, aggression." This is necessary information if he is to avoid the pitfall of following in his father's footsteps. Yoda also teaches him the invaluable lesson so many have taken with them from Star Wars: "Do or do not. There is no try."

V. The orphan receives some kind of final reward. For some it may be money, status, marriage, a home…

Luke's rewards aren't the typical material rewards so many orphans receive. There is no castle, no beautiful princess on his arm, no piles of gold. When all is said and done, Luke has received many rewards from the course of his journey: the love and trust of his friends, the realization of his dream to become one of the galaxy's best fighter pilots, and finally, the fulfillment of his destiny to become a Jedi Knight. The heart and soul of his reward, though, is found in the return of his father. This, surely, is the best end result any orphan could hope for and one that we seldom see.

VI. There is almost always a punishment for those who have mistreated the orphan.

As I mentioned, Luke wasn't mistreated by his initial caregivers as are most literary orphans. There is no denying, though, that he had enemies who made his journey more difficult.

We must look outside Luke's storyline for a moment to see the punishment received by those who had a hand in his initial miserable situation. His father's betrayal of both his mother and the Jedi order were the primary acts responsible for Luke's orphan status. Though we do not see Darth Vader punished in the typical sense of the word, we know that he suffered because we saw the physical scars. Likewise, we saw the remorse when, just prior to his death, he spoke to his son. On a slightly different note, we also saw the downfall of the mastermind behind his father's betrayal when Palpatine was thrown into the abyss in the Death Star throne room.

Now that we've seen how Luke fits into the mold of literary orphan hero, we're free to look for the lessons this hero archetype can teach us. The most succinct synopsis I've seen came from Terry Windling, an editor, artist, essayist, and the author of books for both children and adults. She wrote: "The heroism of fairy tale orphans lies in their ability to survive and transform their fate, and to outwit those who would do them harm without losing their lives, their souls, or their humanity in the process."[8]

Though Luke's situation was rare in that he ended up in a relatively normal, loving foster family we find ourselves present when that comfort is taken from him brutally and abruptly. He was, for the first time in his life, truly without the security of his home and family. This is, in fact, the point behind the use of the orphan as a literary device – to remove the limits placed on a young person because of parental restriction. "This condition is the struggle for the orphan as literary archetype."[9] Because they do not have a parent to provide security and care, the orphan must become both a seeker and a fighter.

Author Carol S. Pearson has studied the orphan as an archetype. She feels the orphan has many gifts to offer as a result of their upbringing and experiences. According to her, someone might become an orphan figuratively any time they are "disappointed, abandoned, betrayed by life -- and especially by the people who were supposed to care for (them)."[10] The essential lesson of the orphan, however, is something she sums up as this: "The gift of the orphan archetype is a freedom from dependence, a form of interdependent self-reliance. We no longer rely on external authority figures, but rather learn to help ourselves and each other...The orphan calls us to wake up, let go of our illusions, and face painful realities."[11]

Luke Skywalker's popularity as a hero is at least in part due to his orphan beginnings. Nothing could have been more difficult for Luke to accept than the truth that his father was not an idyllic Jedi Knight, or even an average guy working on a spice freighter. He was forced to shed these illusions in the face of the reality that his father was one of the galaxy's most hated men.

Accept the truth he does, though, and he becomes stronger for it. By the final chapter in the *Star Wars* saga, *Return of the Jedi*, Luke is far more than just an orphan farmboy from Tatooine. He beat the odds of his uncertain origins and became a confident pilot and wise Jedi Knight. The audience -- whether invested in his journey by sympathy or empathy -- share in his victory.

"Because orphans represent the feelings and pain that all humans experience, the character still resonates with audiences of adults and children alike. And until the day when no one feels the pain of isolation, orphan characters will continue to symbolize it for us."[12]

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From Traveler to Journeying Hero

by Keith Palmer

The "hero's journey" described by Joseph Campbell is a frequent reference in examinations of the *Star Wars* saga,[1] suggesting that the experiences of Luke Skywalker and other characters in the movies can be seen as reflections of a "story pattern"[2] shared among the world's myths and cultures. This journey is often presented as an internal one, a growth and development towards a full maturity. At the same time, though, the characters are involved in a good deal of physical travel, from place to place and, as befitting a story set in "a galaxy far, far away," from planet to planet. The "hero's journey" often involves this kind of travel, and travel itself is a common and well-developed story type in its own right. However, the development of both kinds of journeys in the *Star Wars* saga suggests that, in this case at least, simple travel alone is not enough to complete someone.

Journeys made in mythology include Prometheus traveling to Mount Olympus to steal fire from the gods and return it to the Earth and Jason searching for the Golden Fleece,[3] and the idea moved on as myth transformed into literature in the Odyssey of Homer. Traveling not just within the world as known but beyond its limits has remained a popular storytelling framework from that day to now: it can be as simple as allowing exciting events and new encounters to succeed one another, but can also subvert the real world while reflecting it, as in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* or suggest allegory, as in the modern fantasies that followed J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings.*[4]

As the last spaces were filled in on the maps of the world in the 19th century, some experiments in storytelling that might have sought out mere "lost worlds" before began to reach beyond and above its surface to new worlds.[5] This formed one of the threads that led into science fiction, and one history of that genre has suggested that science fiction is a form of myth that offers "transcendent" wonder for a rational culture, powers and beings and realms beyond common experience yet connected to it by the invocation of scientific knowledge.[6]

One of the sources George Lucas began to draw inspiration for *Star Wars* from was the science fiction serials he had seen on television as a child, which suggested settings to be combined with other influences. As he was later to explain, "I became very fascinated with how we could replace this mythology that drifted out of fashion--the Western. One of the prime issues of mythology was that it was always on the frontier, over the hill. It was always in this mysterious place where anything could happen, so you could deal with metaphor and that sort of thing. And I said, well, the only place we've got left is space--that's the frontier."[7] Where previous science fiction movies involving space such as *This Island Earth, Forbidden Planet,* and *2001: A Space Odyssey* had begun on Earth or at least referenced Earth as their starting point, though, the journey Lucas developed reflected the earlier development of written science fiction in no longer needing to begin from and return to the known "Village," but to inhabit altogether the transcendent "World Beyond the Hill."[8]

Lucas's first preserved story treatment, *Journal of the Whills,* ends incomplete with its characters beginning their "greatest adventure" by being summoned to a desolate planet.[9] In the treatments and early drafts that followed, the characters continued to travel across wastelands and to different planets, but as they developed the main characters began to

change from experienced generals, ready to deal with each challenge they encountered along the way, to youths learning and coming of age through their travels.[10] Then, at around the time Lucas was writing his third draft, he read Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* and, realizing his story could be described as a "hero's journey," began consciously following the story pattern.[11] The movie's story continued to change, though, and one change after filming had been completed may have helped to emphasize a different journey also in the movie's structure. Scenes featuring Luke and his friends on Tatooine were cut out to emphasize the Death Star plans, "the thing that everyone in the film is very much concerned about," in the words of film editor Paul Hirsch, passing from Princess Leia through the droids to Luke, and as Hirsch also said, "when you go to the planet with the robots, you don't know what you are going to find--the first characters you see are Jawas--which gives it a whole air of exotic mystery."[12]

When audiences first met Luke Skywalker, then, he was living on his aunt and uncle's out-of-the-way moisture farm on a planet that, no matter how exotic it might have seemed to those audiences, just seemed out-of-the-way to him. He has been described as "unformed and untested, innocent of a wide experience of the world," a description also connected to the Fool card in the Tarot,[13] but Luke does have dreams of entering the larger world by traveling to "the Academy." Even as his friends leave, though, Luke is delayed by the reluctance of his uncle Owen.

Beyond this simple plan, larger events are already in motion. The arrival of Artoo-Detoo and See-Threepio at the moisture farm as a waypoint in the journey they're already on serves as Luke's "call to adventure," and as Joseph Campbell said, "The adventure may begin as a mere blunder."[14] Even with his first awareness of Leia's message, Luke leaves the farm for the first time intending nothing more than to bring Artoo back. In the process of this simple journey, though, he has to be rescued by Ben Kenobi, and learns a first truth about the old Jedi and himself, if one valid from "a certain point of view." When offered the chance to set out on a larger journey beyond his home planet, a journey at least like the one he had envisioned taking on his own but also involving learning about the Force, he proves reluctant. As has often been noted before, this marks Luke's "refusal of the call,"[15] an idea that was worked in little by little to the early drafts of the script. Fate in the form of the Imperial forces, however, takes the lives of his aunt and uncle and removes any chance of his returning to the way things were.

In describing that part of the hero's journey he called "The Road of Trials," Joseph Campbell suggested that "the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms," and that "This is a favorite phase of the myth-adventure." One deliberate decision in filming *Star Wars* was to emphasize this entry into strangeness by featuring the widest variety of aliens in the Mos Eisley spaceport cantina.[16] Campbell pointed out that the hero, when facing "miraculous tests and ordeals," "is covertly aided by the advice, amulets, and secret agents of the supernatural helper whom he met before his entrance into this region," but may also discover "that there is a benign power everywhere supporting him in his superhuman passage."[17] Luke is fortunate enough to both be aided by Obi-Wan Kenobi and to begin learning about the Force.

At the same time, another companion added to Luke's journey suggests how travel alone may not be enough to learn everything a hero may need. Han Solo comments that "I've flown from one side of this galaxy to the other. I've seen a lot of strange stuff, but I've never seen anything to make me believe there's one all-powerful force controlling everything." To Harrison Ford, this line "perfectly explained his character."[18] In a galaxy turned into an Empire by a user of the Dark Side of the Force, Han thinks he's seen what

matters. While he may start from a different position than Luke, though, he also learns through experience. By the time that Luke launches with the other Rebel pilots to confront the Death Star, Han is able to tell him "May the Force be with you." It marks another step towards Han committing himself to a hero's cause. Luke too, though, has to face a similar case of thinking he knows the world as it is in the course of his hero's journey. Traveling to Dagobah, he manages to find the Jedi Master Yoda without realizing it. Again, reaching a new location alone is not enough to result in inward growth; realizing what one has encountered there is also necessary.

George Lucas has commented that "The *Star Wars* saga is like a symphony, which has recurring themes. You have one theme orchestrated in a particular way or place, which then comes back orchestrated as a minor theme somewhere else."[19] The idea of someone being interested in simple travel as a means of escape before even being aware of the possibility of a "hero's journey" is also touched on with the young Anakin Skywalker. Like his son, Anakin is a pilot to start with, and he has intentions to "fly away from this place" one day. The thought of that simple freedom impresses him enough that, when told he's to become a Jedi, his first reaction is just "You mean I get to come with you in your starship?" At the same time, as with Luke, Anakin's first journey sets him on a longer path than he might have intended, reflecting the uncertain destination of other mythic voyages. Alderaan was destroyed before Luke ever reached it,[20] and while Anakin's group does reach Coruscant, no help for the invasion of Naboo is available there, forcing them to return to their starting point and settle matters themselves. Before Anakin began that journey, he has been trying to learn about the larger galaxy by listening to passing "traders and star pilots," and at one point says to Qui-Gon Jinn that he wants to be the first one to see all the planets in the galaxy. It's left to audiences to wonder if he accomplished this goal only as Darth Vader.

The influences and inspirations that combined to shape the *Star Wars* saga helped to make travel, the journey to witness things never seen before, an obvious part of the movies. George Lucas did remark on the appeal of travel when he commented, "I would feel very good if someday they colonize Mars, when I am ninety-three years old or whatever, and the leader of the first colony says: 'I really did it because I was hoping there would be a Wookiee up here.'"[21] However, in developing the themes of the saga, journeys inward towards self-discovery and self-development also became fundamental. The "hero's journey" of Luke Skywalker and others was more involved, and more universal, in the end than just traveling to distant planets.

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Issue 12

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The Heart of the Matter:
Padmé, Luke, and the Role of Compassion in *Star Wars*
by ami-padme

If *Star Wars* can be called a story of redemption -- for the galaxy and Republic at large, for the Jedi Order, and for the character of Anakin Skywalker specifically, then the factors that lead to redemption, forgiveness, and rebirth form a crucial part of the story told in the six-film saga.

It can be argued that while redemption of people is a personal act of inner conversion, there are always outside influences that help that change along, specifically people within the convert's inner circle who not only see more to them than the rest of the world, but who have the ability to make that person see this in themselves. While there are numerous people who care for Anakin and have a stake in what could be broadly called the status of his soul, there are two characters in *Star Wars* who clearly have the biggest impact on his redemption: his wife Padmé, and his son Luke. Not coincidentally, these two characters show some of the great capacity for compassion, forgiveness, and understanding of any characters in the movies. They also are, respectively, great champions of the democracy of the old Galactic Republic and the spiritual force for good of the Jedi Order, and play roles (both through Anakin and as individuals) in each organization's eventual rebirth. While Luke may seem most obviously connected with his father -- similar looks, both are Jedi, Luke's story revolves around the way he chooses to deal with his father -- Luke may also be understood as an avatar of his mother's, carrying Padmé's compassion through to a new generation and continuing her quests to restore the galaxy and her husband/family.

Compassion is broadly defined as "a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering."[1] In the thesaurus, "intolerance" and "ill will" are listed as the word's antonyms.[2] It is easy to see how this applies to both Padmé and Luke with regard to how they approach Anakin.

Padmé consistently acts with compassion to Anakin, even from the time that he is a young boy. She goes out of her way to comfort and console him after he leaves Tatooine and his mother behind, speaking with him when he's left alone on the transport ship. That she manages to put aside her own considerable worries to speak with Anakin about his is notable. Later when Anakin comes to tell her goodbye -- again, with Padmé facing her own troubles and preparing to speak on behalf of her people before the Senate -- she takes the time to receive him and to explain that "her heart goes with [him]." Anakin, who has a boyish crush on her from the moment they meet clearly appreciates and places great emphasis on Padmé's gestures of caring and friendship as he grows into adulthood.

In *Attack of the Clones*, Padmé's compassion is a key component of the romance between her and a non-grown Anakin Skywalker. She listens empathetically as Anakin vents his frustrations about the Jedi Order and his Master Obi-Wan to her, easily eliciting further comments from Anakin and helping him to see his situation in a more productive light. When his mother dies later on in the film, it is Padmé who hears Anakin's confession of what he did to the Tusken village, and it is she who accepts and sympathizes with what has happened, and offers Anakin a literal shoulder to cry on. That she chooses that approach instead of a more judgmental, condemning one has garnered some criticism in certain quarters, but seems to be in-line with her position vis-a-vis Anakin generally. What Anakin seems to need at that point is not a scolding or punishment (as one would assume Obi-Wan would respond with) nor manipulative encouragement (as Palpatine gives him in

Revenge of the Sith when he attempts to make this kind of retaliation seem normal and expected). What he needs, and what Padmé provides, is almost literally, "deep sympathy...for another who is stricken by misfortune." This help, in the place of potential rejection or manipulation, helps Anakin move past the point of his mother's death and his reaction to it, and trust himself enough to function normally for the rest of the movie. In *Revenge of the Sith*, Padmé shows great concern for Anakin's well-being and state of mind throughout movie, trying to reassure him about her safety and about her pregnancy, though Anakin's fears (and other issues with the Jedi and the Republic) overwhelm him regardless. Most importantly, at the end of the film, when Anakin has completely lost himself in the Dark Side, she still tries desperately to bring him back to his sense, by reassuring him that his love is all she needs, and that she continues to love him and only wants him to come back from his self-destructive path. Her first words later are concern for him, and her dying words are a desperate attempt to get Obi-Wan to see that Anakin is still able to be saved. Though she does not accept Anakin's choices, and recognizes them as horrifyingly wrong, she still lets her love for him guide her actions.

Aside from her direct dealings with Anakin, Padmé is also shown to be a compassionate person in general. During the occupation of her planet in *The Phantom Menace* she is deeply concerned for the potential suffering of her people during her time off-planet. She decides to leave the safety of Coruscant and return to Naboo in part so that her "fate would be no different than that of [her] people." In a deleted scene from *Attack of the Clones*, Padmé speaks to Anakin about work she had done with Galactic refugees. In a somewhat metaphorical sense, Padmé also is wounded as the Republic is destroyed from within -- she is clearly concerned and dismayed over the state of the Galactic government in Episodes I and II, and is devastated by the creation of the Empire in Episode III. Joseph Campbell and others have famously pointed out that the literal meaning of the word compassion is "to suffer with."[3] For Padmé, this clearly does not only apply to Anakin.

It is also worth noting that in the prequels, Anakin gives his own definition of the word "compassion" in the movie, *Attack of the Clones*: "Compassion, which I would define as unconditional love, is central to a Jedi's life." This is said in an important scene in Anakin and Padmé's courtship, and comes to describe a large part of their dynamic and its importance to him. Wikipedia.com states that "[u]nconditional love is a concept that means showing love towards someone regardless of his or her actions... It is a concept comparable to true love, a term...more frequently used to describe love between lovers."[4] Though Anakin's fear for Padmé (and for himself and their child) combines with other factors to cause Anakin's downfall, his wife's compassion is one of the foundation blocks for his redemption.

That redemption, of course, comes through Padmé and Anakin's son, Luke. He does not find out for two full movies that Darth Vader is Anakin Skywalker, and only has *Return of the Jedi* to truly deal with this revelation. His approach echoes his mother's in the earlier trilogy -- while in no way accepting his father's wrong actions, Luke hope to bring his father back to Light without fighting him. This decision seems to fly in the face of logic, not least because Luke has never known his father as anything other than an "evil" man, unlike his mother, who knew Anakin as a child and later as a husband. Luke not only knew just Vader, but had been lied to for the majority of the time he knew him to believe that Vader has murdered the father he idolized in absentia. Despite that, at the first opportunity to give his thoughts on how to proceed, Luke tells Obi-Wan that he does not believe he can kill Vader, causing Obi-Wan to lament him as a lost, last hope. He tells Leia that he feels he can save Vader, rather than running away from him or attempting to defeat him, and stands by that conviction in the face of Leia's stunned disbelief. He then tries repeatedly to

get through to his father despite the complex and difficult circumstances on the Death Star with Emperor Palpatine. Luke final act in the throne room is to once again refuse to fight or kill his father, and to defy the Emperor by focusing on the good man and Jedi his father once was. As George Lucas once explained to *Rolling Stone*, "Darth Vader has compassion for his children, and that's ultimately what children are for."[5] In Episode VI, Palpatine once again tries to manipulate a situation where Anakin is set to receive some badly needed empathy -- he tells Vader very confidently that Luke's "compassion for [Vader] will be his undoing," and spends the majority of the throne room scenes trying to convince Luke that Vader is beyond redemption and cannot be reached even by the love of his son, and that Luke must give in to his uncompassionate feelings of anger and betrayal he holds toward his father in order to defeat and kill him. Luke's belief in his father, which eventually carries the day on a personal and galactic level, shows that he has the same compassion as his mother.

Compassion, and all it entails -- forgiveness, acceptance, unconditional love -- holds a special place in the *Star Wars* story, and with special characters in Padmé and Luke representing it through two generations of the saga. In the end, it is this characteristic that makes the biggest difference.

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